

The
APPLE WOMAN
of the
KLICKITAT

ANNA VAN RENSSELAER MORRIS





THE APPLE WOMAN OF THE KCLICKITAT



MIRA-MONTE

THE APPLE WOMAN OF THE KLUCKITAT

BY
ANNA VAN RENSSELAER MORRIS



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ILLUSTRATIONS

MIRA-MONTE	<i>Frontispiece</i>
NO SCRUB OAK BREEDING PLACES FOR APPLE-TREE DESTROYING INSECTS ARE IN THIS ORCHARD .	<i>Facing p. 122</i>
THE LITTLE TREES ARE NOW MORE THAN FOUR YEARS OLD	“ 236
WRAPPED SEPARATELY, THE FRUIT IS PACKED IN BUSHEL BOXES, WORTH NET, ONE DOLLAR PER BOX	“ 248

THE APPLE WOMAN OF KLINKITAT

CHAPTER I

My home is on the apex of a hill, eighteen miles from Mt. Hood. Between the two elevations are densely-wooded heights and deep canyons, the Columbia river and Oregon's famous Mosier valley. Since early spring the hills have been carpeted with a low-growing purple bloom which blends softly with the forest's green and the sky's pale blue. Beyond Mt. Hood looms high, and aloof, as though to preside over even so beautiful a landscape were a condescension. Sometimes the heavens are so clear that the mountain's peak seems to be puncturing them, and the whiteness of it, from snow-line to apex, is so dazzling that the eyes turn for relief toward the dense forest fringing this orchard of King David and Delicious apple trees.

A big red apple lured me here. While I was eating it, the donor, a Pacific Northwest real estate agent, visiting New York, told me of the glorious

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climate of Klickitat County, Washington, where the fruit had been grown, and of the cheap lands to be secured there by the early—well, he drew the line before calling me a worm. He described the region as a Paradise of brief winters, cool summers and phenomenal prosperity. Then he paused for breath. I ate the apple's core. At the moment New York City was in a blizzard's grasp and my newspaper job in jeopardy. It seemed as though existence would always be like that unless something drastic were done.

"Break away and go in for apple-raising, April Godmother," advised Seton Postley, preparing for Princeton and spending a week-end in town. "Were I of age and my own master, that would be the life for me. Bother books!" He helped himself to a second King David, jammed a Delicious into an overcoat pocket, grabbed his bag and a kiss and made off for his train. But he left his nineteen-year enthusiasm behind. Apple-raising, viewed from a distance of three thousand miles, certainly was the life—the only life worth considering. Without delaying to seek the counsel of a cool-headed, experienced man of business, I impulsively invested the half of my savings in an unimproved quarter section—one hundred and sixty acres—of land in eastern Washington. Six weeks later when a doctor advised complete change of air and an out-of-door life

—could that be managed—I resolved to come here and develop the property. The plunge was backed with a superb confidence born of dense ignorance of the soil and its tillage.

King Winter reigned supreme in New York the March morning that Seton Postley escorted me to the railway station. “You’re in great luck, April Godmother,” he said, “to be able to cut away from all this,” waving a hand largely. “If mother would only see the folly of forcing me to go through college. And”—dolefully—“there’s six more months of prep. work, before beginning the four years’ grind.” With only his shock of fair hair and his blond, beardless face showing from behind the iron bars of the station’s concourse, the boy made me think of a Peri peering through the gates of Paradise, as I turned to wave a final farewell when boarding the west-bound train. For several moments thereafter I mentally echoed his favorite grumble: “Our part of the east has the worst climate in the world,” and was glad to be gliding out of it.

Six days later I steamed up the Columbia river from Portland. Spring showed herself everywhere and filled me with admiration for everything on the west side of the Rocky Mountains; also a willingness to agree with a Pacific Northwest citizen who, discoursing enthusiastically to a group of tourists on the steamer’s deck, maintained that “Klinkitat

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county's climate is the finest in the world for fruit-raising. An orchardist need only set out a few hundred young trees and let Nature get busy making an annual income of several thousand dollars for him. Of course," he added, as the steamer appeared about to poke her prow into the Washington bank of the mighty river, "it's a pioneer country, as yet, and a bit roughish. But within five years it will be impossible to buy an acre of orchard property within twenty miles of——"

"Baldwin!" shouted a deckhand as the steamer's starboard side swung against a floating dock.

"And now's the psychological time for buying raw land," concluded the speaker, who proved to be a Klickitat county real estate dealer. Some of the tourists smiled incredulously as they accepted the man's business cards. But my heart beat hopefully as I followed him ashore, for six miles to the north of Baldwin, in the heart of the region he was exploiting, is located my quarter section. This village gateway to the forest primeval and the metropolis of the Klickitat hills, is an aggregation of wall tents and board shacks, standing amid a pine-tree grove on a wind-swept bluff between the Columbia river and the mouth of the Big Klickitat. Baldwin's population numbers about a hundred persons—some of them possessing a soul. Half of the adult portion deals in real estate, and the other half devotes

its energies to looking after business at the railway station, fisheries, two general stores and two hotels.

A temptation to linger at the wharf appeared in the guise of a trio of Indians—a young squaw whose wealth of hair fell in a single lusterless black braid half way to her moccasin tops, a middle-aged squaw of enormous girth—partly due to many layers of clothes—and an elderly brave of dour aspect. He answered for the younger woman when I addressed a remark to her. “She no und’san’,” he grunted, and possibly she did not. Anyhow, she did not look toward me and, failing in this initial attempt to climb into aboriginal society, I slowly followed a procession of citizens who had been awaiting the steamer. The meandering trail led into the heart of the village and to the larger of the two stores, to whose proprietor—Mr. John Tanner, richest, oldest, most influential pioneer of the county—I had a letter of introduction. The store was temporarily closed because on the previous day it had been sold—good will, stock and outstanding accounts—to a newcomer, who was busily taking an inventory. However, it was easy to locate the Tanner residence, a one-story, five-room shack of battened, weather-beaten boards, rendered wind and dust-proof by a lining of plaster and building paper. From a narrow plank sidewalk, the front door opened into a living-room, whose lace curtains, Brussels carpet and

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plush-upholstered furniture contrasted oddly with the shack's exterior. Several men, roughly dressed and wearing sheepskin chaps, were packing the contents of the other rooms. The residence had been sold with the store property, and the Tanners were expected to move out of it so soon as they could find a place to move into. Meanwhile, from her rocking chair, the mistress of the domicile issued orders to the packers, and serenely darned her husband's socks. Mrs. Tanner proved the most entertaining woman I had encountered in many a day. Within a few moments I felt entirely at home with her and was eagerly asking her questions about frontier life, and she as freely furnishing information, occasionally interrupting herself to speak to one of the packers—herders down from the sheep ranch, she explained, and a trifling, clumsy lot, if they weren't watched. As I was about to put a question about the neighboring Indians, a stout woman in the late thirties, wearing a tailored claret serge suit, a white lingerie blouse and a black straw sailor, unceremoniously flung open the shack's screen door, walked into the room, panting laboriously, sank heavily into a rocking chair, and deposited a basket beside it. When she had regained her breath she was introduced as "Seldie," and from the conversation I quickly gathered that she had recently proved up,

acquired title to a quarter section homestead a few miles beyond my property, and had just sold her home "forty" for twelve hundred dollars. She talked enthusiastically of the clothes she meant to buy and the trips she could take with this money until Mr. Tanner broke in: "Seldie," he began gravely, "you've been living like a hermit for five years for the sake of owning enough property to keep you from starving in your old age, when you won't be able to work at nothin'. If you go on the way you're a-plannin' to, you won't have a dollar of money nor an acre of land at the end of another five years. But it's useless to advise anything that's wearin' petticoats," he wound up, glancing reproachfully at his wife, who laughed good-naturedly and despatched him on an errand. Then she turned to Seldie, and said: "What Mr. Tanner says is perfectly true. You'll spend that property acre by acre, and be worse off in the end than you were when you first came to Klickitat—because you'll be that many years older. Now this woman from New York was just asking me if there was anyone she could get to stay with her until her brother can come out here, and seems to me, you're just the one. Since you've sold your home "forty," you'll have to build another shack or rent some sort of a shelter; either way you'd be putting out money you'd ought to save.

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Now she'll pay you reasonable wages for showing her how folks get along in the wilderness at the starting off."

"She's welcome to my advice about clearin' an' plantin', and she'll be learnin' a lot that's more valuable by the mistakes she'll make as she goes along," added Mr. Tanner, entering from the adjoining room, having proceeded no further on his errand.

As Seldie had not as yet received the purchase money for her home "forty" and would necessarily be forced to remain in the neighborhood until the business was settled, she listened patiently to Mrs. Tanner's advice, the while stealing speculative glances toward me. After pondering for a while, she agreed to be my companion in a twelve by fourteen foot wall tent until such time as a ready-cut shack could be set up and made sufficiently comfortable for my semi-invalid brother and general adviser. She was returning up country that afternoon in a neighbor's wagon but she agreed to meet me the following morning at a crossroads within a mile of my property. As I said good-bye to her I felt that we might get along comfortably—if each made concessions to the other's prejudices. Then, having made, at Mrs. Tanner's dictation, a list of camping necessities, I declined her invitation to stop for supper, and went to the second and smaller store,

to purchase a tent, its furnishings, and some groceries.

My trunk had been carried to the larger of the two hotels, and at this hostelry I was ushered to the thirty-five cent supper table, distinguished from the "two-bit" board by virtue of a spotless cloth, a floral centerpiece and a position in a retired corner of the dining-room. That March evening the place was filled with railway employes, sheep-herders and homesteaders—the latter accompanied by their families. Only one among the half-dozen women interested me. She was finishing her supper as I took a seat at the table, and responded to my salutation with a shy half smile which might have been followed by a remark had not someone called: "Evey-line! Come here!" Whereupon she pushed back her chair and tripped across the room to a man whose roughly garbed, tall, gaunt, yet muscular figure filled an open doorway. As she stood beside him, the girl—she appeared scarcely sixteen—looked childishly slender and unformed. "A bride," professed the buxom landlady, as she placed a plate before me. "Married last week at Yakima to that sour-looking feller, almost old enough to be her pa, an' goin' to live round jes' anywheres with him—in a tent, mostly. He's a well-borer, and they're startin' to-night for Hood River to bore for a rich apple

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orchardist. Did you ever see a prettier little thing?" Truthfully I replied, "No." Evey-line's small, regular features, gardenia complexion, soft, finely-grained skin and deep blue eyes were set off by a mass of warm brown hair that broke into bewitching little tendrils about her brow. The atrocious cut of her cheap clothing could not hide the grace of her figure. Nor could her tight, roughly made shoes make her walk clumsily. "Men must have been scarce where she come from," continued the landlady as she sociably took a seat beside me. "That husband of hers has been here often, sometimes for quite some spell, and none of us ain't never got a civil speech out of him. Yes," ruminatively, "she must have been awful anxious to get away from whoever she was livin' with. Likely she had a step——" A crash of crockery behind a swing door opening directly into the kitchen, brought the landlady to her feet: "That butter-fingered cook! There won't be nothing left for us to serve on if he ain't served his walking papers—now!" The swing door swung behind her and I wondered who would cook the morrow's breakfast.

Supper over, the men congregated in the big, bare office, the women and their tired, wailing offspring crowded into the little parlor, and I climbed the stairs to my room. From its window could be seen the boats of fishermen seining for the elusive

salmon in the Columbia, and from the street below me, ascended the voices of two men. Like the average listener, I did not overhear anything flattering, and at once recognized the tones of the talkative real estate agent of the steamboat when he said: "That New York woman, who came this noon, won't have the gumption to appreciate her luck and in a few months will be glad to sell out her quarter section at our price."

"Sure! She'll be plum scared away from here during her first trip up Mullen hill," replied the other confidently. "Lots of *western* women can't stand for that road."

CHAPTER II

DAWN was flaming like a conflagration behind the eastern hills when I started next morning for my new home. My cavalier was a freighter whose cumbersome wagon was drawn by four horses so restive that my heart fluttered between my throat and my toes. For a time we followed the wild romantic gorge of the Big Klickitat which, having cut its way through solid basalt rock, tumbles, tosses and leaps toward its outlet, the Columbia river. Two miles from Baldwin, the road crosses the smaller river via a wooden bridge. Then begins Mullen hill, a tortuous climb up the side of de Petrio canyon, magnificently, fearsomely steep.

As the real estate dealer had prophesied, I was "plum" scared, for the drive over the single track, carved from solid rock and with only occasional widenings, where it is barely possible for wagons to pass, is a nerve-racking experience for an eastern woman unaccustomed to mountain roads. More than once I clutched the sleeve of the freighter, an unsympathetic as well as a reckless person, who allowed the horses to swing their load perilously near to the

precipice's edge. They trotted rapidly for he good-naturedly blasphemed as well as diligently lashed them whenever their speed slackened.

"What would happen were we to meet a runaway team coming down this hill?" I ventured.

"You could climb up them cliffs. Or down into the gorge—if your skirts would let you."

"And if we should meet an automobile?"

The freighter's laugh awoke the canyon's echoes. "There wouldn't be nothin' to do! Them four cayuses would jest raise Hell!"

Going up Mullen hill, which ascends twelve hundred feet in its two miles of length, we passed three Indian homesteads, cultivated to a very slight extent, chiefly with corn, with which the aborigines feed their ponies. It is indeed a poor Indian who has not from ten to fifteen of these animals. When about to meet a brilliantly blanketed young squaw riding astride of a pony and bearing a papoose upon her back, I confidently expected that she would halt and chat for a moment, but, as we were passing her, she turned her face from us, "Indianlike," muttered the freighter, and spoke no more until a half-hour after reaching the top of the hill. There, having halted his horses, he tersely announced: "Go through them woods for a mile an' you'll come to your ranch. So long!"

The wagon rattled away and left me standing be-

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side the road. My wrist-watch said ten o'clock, the time set by Seldie for our rendezvous. But, although not a soul was in sight and I could not see twenty feet ahead into the dense woods beyond which lay my ranch, I was neither afraid nor lonely. Nor yet discouraged for the March air was balmy as a New York May day is expected to be, the sunlight filtered through the branches of the trees upon a carpet of flowers, and myriads of birds chirped cheerily. Spring comes early to this portion of the Pacific Northwest, a region whose high latitude is mercifully tempered by the influence of the Japan current.

Albeit the denseness of the forest was a surprise, it did not dismay me. Rather was the heavy growth of trees a matter for rejoicing. The experienced Mr. Tanner, unconsciously backing up the fervent real estate serpent, had said that nearly all good fruit land in the best districts of the Pacific Northwest is clothed with oak interspersed with pine or fir, and buck brush—the latter a low-growing, flowering bush with tenacious roots. To clear such land costs from fifty to one hundred and fifty dollars per acre, according to density of growth, and the locality. Generally speaking the heavier the growth, the better the soil; and, usually, the less fir, the better the climate for apple growing. Continuing to quote from Mr. Tanner: Plowing, harrowing, leveling and the setting out of trees will amount to an additional

fifty dollars per acre, and it will take from ten to fifteen dollars annually to care for a planted acre during the first four years. After attaining that age the trees will begin to bear fruit, not what you could call a fortune. Well-cared for orchards, however, have often returned the complete cash outlay, including purchase price of land, from the fifth year's crop.

Seldie did not long keep me waiting. A strident voice coming from the direction of the curve round which the freighter had disappeared announced her approach. Soon the claret serge suit brightened the landscape. Its wearer was talking to a short man who seemed to be composed of bone and sinew and with hardly more flesh upon him than a newly hatched chicken. Although clad in the blue overalls, straw hat and low-cut shoes of the newcomer who is making his wardrobe suit the frontier as best it can, he was as well set up as a soldier. He stood at attention, motionless, immobile, while Seldie and I exchanged greetings. Then she introduced him in characteristic, straight-to-the-point manner: "This man's name is Peter Barney. Him and his family's living about a mile up that road, on a "forty" they've just bought on time with a little money they'd saved, and he's looking for a job as foreman. Being he was raised on a farm and afterward served as a sergeant in the army, he's had experience bossing

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men. I brought him along this morning, thinking mebbe you'd like to talk with him."

Mr. Barney and I shook hands: "We shall need help—right away—to set up our tent—and for other work during this week—certainly," I said lamely, having vaguely begun to realize that firewood and water for housekeeping would be imperative. "Suppose we engage your time for this week, Mr. Barney—and after that—we'll see——"

Within the next few hours Seldie proved that Nature had designed her for frontier life, even though she had started her career as a dressmaker in a large city. Peter Barney clearly was where he belonged. Between them they lost little time about locating a high, dry site for the tent, and in setting it up. Aided by magic hands, Peter Barney could not more speedily have had the stove, cots and other furnishings unpacked and in place under the canvas, and no sooner did the tent begin to look like a home than Seldie appeared with a bundle of sticks. As she began to kindle a fire, Barney, picking up a bucket, announced that he would get some water—I could not see where—and plunged into what looked to my untutored eyes like a trackless forest. A supper of bread and cheese, canned beef and beans set out upon a table placed under the tent's fly, was waiting to be eaten and I was secretly pining for a cup of hot tea, when Mr. Barney ap-

peared carrying a pail of water. "Did you think I'd run off with the bucket?" he asked jocosely. "I had to stop awhile an' visit with the lady I got it off'n of. She's your nearest neighbor—lives half a mile away. Mis' Loring's her name." Seldie, who knew all about our nearest neighbors, proceeded to explain that Caleb Loring is known hereabout as the Professional Rester. He cannot work in winter because of the cold; nor in summer because of the heat. During intermediate seasons he has to rest. In consequence his wife supports him as well as their hulking, half-grown son and their elaborately dressed baby, by washing and baking for bachelor homesteaders. Although, to the casual observer, Mr. Loring's appearance and manners would not suggest aristocratic lineage, he is a kinsman of a prominent New England family which boasts an Episcopal bishop, and he occupies much of his time in searching for the missing link in the chain which connects him with it. It will be an interesting moment for the onlookers when the Washington branch endeavors to affiliate with the Massachusetts branch of a family tree whose roots have been firmly imbedded in Back Bay soil for three centuries, although the original emigrant and his titled wife—"the Lady Mary"—settled at Flushing, Long Island. I can vouch for the wealth and splendor of the pair, because I have seen their graves.

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Within forty-eight hours after meeting Peter Barney it was apparent that he was going to suit as a foreman and that he was going to try hard to get along with my ignorance, since, in order to support his wife and their four children, he must take employment somewhere. He expects to develop his own place by working early of mornings, late of nights and most of Sundays—a programme likely to tax the constitution of a Hercules. But Barney is optimistic.

In common with Seldie, Barney has a genius for speedily and thoroughly acquainting himself with his environment. Consequently he was soon able to assemble a large gang of Italian laborers from The Dalles, sixteen miles east of Baldwin. They were set to felling the trees upon the hillside ten-acre plot, designed for an orchard—after consulting with Mr. Tanner—because of the air and water drainage afforded. To accommodate this gang of laborers, it seemed advisable to rent from an absent homesteader a small holding comprising a few acres of partly cleared but uncultivated land, a three-room shack, a bunk house and—most of all important—a well of clearest, purest water that has never been known to give out. From that well comes also our own daily water supply, which, but for the men, would have to be carried by Seldie and me. Luckily, several of the Italians speak English to a degree,

and through these Barney gives to the gang his fluent, highly seasoned orders. The employment of this large number of laborers and the speed with which the work is being pushed forward so that the cleared plot may be burned over directly after the autumn rains, amazes our neighbors. They have estimated the monthly payroll and mistakenly concluded that my enterprise is backed by a "barrel of money." As Mr. Tanner says: "So long as you have the ready money to speed along the work, why not go at top speed and get the orchard planted next spring instead of a year from now? Anyhow, fall planting's no good."

CHAPTER III

It is three months since that March morning when I stood alone but not lonely on the roadside waiting to be joined by Seldie. It will be five years before I can reasonably expect to gather a crop of apples from this orchard at Mira-Monte, so named because from the homestead hilltop one "sees the mountain," which to all ears hereabout implies Hood. When there is rain that mountain is blanketed with gray, low-hanging clouds, the forests are blurred, and the hills are shapeless masses. And, because we have no umbrellas, if we are forced to go out of doors during a storm, we get soaked to the pelt. The rain is most irritating while we are traveling over the trails, for the trees and bushes seem always to be shaking themselves while we are walking under them. Lacking a horse, it is next to impossible for us to use the county roads—actually rivers of mud, which cakes itself so liberally upon the boots that each successive step requires greater effort. For laundry purposes we are catching as much water as possible in a half-dozen hogsheads set a short distance from the tent. Already one of those hogsheads has caused a trag-

edy. This morning Seldie found in it a kitten which had tumbled over the edge during the night. The fatality leaves but three of the four kittens born to Pussy a month ago, but they are three too many. We did not welcome their arrival, but, as we could not bear to drown them, they were transferred from their birthplace under the tent range to an excelsior-lined box in the storage shed. Pussy sees no reason why her offspring should not live in the tent and persistently carries them to its door, prepared to take advantage of the first chance to enter.

Although these kittens are a great nuisance they are regularly fed and thrive marvelously on cereals. When they are frolicing happily about, looking at us with confiding, innocent eyes, we freely admit that their sole fault is their superfluity. Because of the depredations of field mice, one cat is a necessity. Pussy Mother works very hard to hold her situation, and it is not her fault that her children are too indolent to earn their board. They might do better were she a less generous provider, always bringing to her family tit-bits such as mice caught on the clearing, and lizards patiently stalked in the forest.

The most important member of this household is Collie, a four-months-old pup with a feathery red-gold coat, four white stockings, black-tipped ears and soulful brown eyes. Because of his evenly mixed

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shepherd and Irish setter breed, he is wonderfully intelligent. Also perfectly healthy, despite a tiresome diet of cereal and milk. He could count upon the toes of his paws the number of his meat feasts, as he gets bones only when his devoted friend, Philip Trevor, brings them from Portland. The first time that Collie had a bone he attempted to bite the hand of this friend, who took the tit-bit from him for the purpose of cracking it. Now every disinterred bone is brought to us to be cracked, and not until then will the dog gnaw at it.

Seldie's cow, brought here from the recently sold homestead "forty," is thriving on a range of eighty acres, and providing more milk than we can consume or give to the Italian laborers—who better like red wine. We had been considering buying a churn and making butter from the surplus milk, though the lack of running water and a still house would handicap us—I suppose. Seldie says that we could manage—some way—but I question that she has ever manufactured a pound of butter. In truth, I have never seen a pound of it in the making.

Mr. Tanner made one of his helpful suggestions to-day when he dropped in for luncheon—under the tent's fly—on his way home from his up-country sheep range: "In a couple of weeks, when my droves of sheep will be passing near this place, you can have all the lambs that hasn't got no mothers. Bring

'em up by hand. Feed 'em with cow's milk. You won't be able to take care of more than twenty lambs on this heavily wooded claim, but you can make eight dollars apiece on that many every year. And you'll find that every dollar'll count long before you've gathered the first crop of apples."

Long before Mr. Tanner's remark, I had begun to realize that my dollars must be carefully counted and husbanded. Nevertheless four hundred of them had been sent that day, in cheque form, in payment for a ready-to-set-up shack, the nucleus of a house to be added to from time to time as necessity shall demand. The shack includes a ten by sixteen living-room, with door opening directly from a six by sixteen porch, and a pair of eight by ten chambers. Behind these two small rooms, Barney is to build a lean-to kitchen and pantry. As the chimneys in the living-room and the lean-to will enable us to have two stoves and as there is enough firewood on the place to last for forty years—it seems to me—Seldie and I should spend a perfectly comfortable winter. For her sake I wish there were more neighbors of the sort she is willing to cultivate. She simply cannot endure the Lorings, and flatly refuses to associate with Indians. Otherwise we might—perhaps—get upon dropping-in-for-a-chat terms with at least one aboriginal family. The quarter section adjoining my west line belongs to Indian Freddy, an in-

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dustrious, educated and prosperous aborigine, who cultivates about a quarter of his homestead and employs white laborers in preference to his own kind. He and his squaw, to whom he is most kind and attentive, are rarely to be found at their Klickitat shack, as they have a larger property elsewhere in the state. Moreover, like many of the aborigines hereabout, they migrate to the Cascade mountains in the spring and remain there until late autumn. The neighbor on the east, Thomas Nelson, devotes his time and his energy to the tilling of his forty-acre holding, for he is desperately anxious to make it valuable. Dwellers hereabout refer to Nelson as the "sod widower," because he is the only man in this region who enjoys that distinction, although there are several widowers of the grass variety. The Nelson household consists of its head and an only son, Percy, sixteen years of age and well known to everyone within a day's—or a night's—ride of his home. Percy's regular features, large brown eyes and well-knit, tall figure may have much to do with his popularity among the young girls, but the older people like him for his boyish frankness, his affection for his father, and his industrious habits. His love of reading specially commends him to me. It is a pleasure to lend him books and in every way spur his ambition to acquire an education.

In the diction of this region, our second nearest neighbor, Mr. Francis Rawle, "baches." He is a

freighter and his home is the most attractive looking one hereabout. The two-story, hip-roofed shack has that unusual advantage, a veranda crossing its front, and from its steps a graveled path runs between rows of tall trees to the gate. At the rear is a young orchard flanked by corn fields. Beyond is the virgin forest. Yet the green window blinds of the shack are always closely drawn and rarely does smoke issue from its chimney, for the freighter has divorced the wife for whom he made the home. Their story is one common the world over. The childless wife, discontented with life in a sparsely settled place, met, during frequent visits to friends in Baldwin, a man who told her and—more flatteringly dangerous—showed her his admiration. By degrees she passed more and more time away from her home. Then the neighbors “talked,” some friend considered it a religious duty to tell the husband of his wife’s flirtation, followed mutual recriminations, and finally a divorce. Rather than pay alimony, Rawle divided his property equally with the woman, giving her an up-country ranch and keeping for himself the homestead facing the county road. There he lives, “doing for himself” whenever at home, and paying scant attention to his neighbors who describe him as a good fellow and his ex-wife as a fool. “I’ve knowed Cassandra Rawle sence she was a little girl an’ she ain’t naturally bad,” declares Mr. John Tanner. “She jest thinks it’s smart to be fast.”

CHAPTER IV

THROUGHOUT October the shack's windows and doors remained wide open, the air was like wine and the sun streamed warmly upon hills and canyons clothed with red and gold foliage. Many of our days were spent in raking the ground clean of leaves and twigs and piling them upon bonfires on the clearing, purely for the pleasure of inhaling the odor of the burning pine logs, and of being employed out of doors. To get this ten acres of land cleared, we have sacrificed wood, which, were it in a marketable region, would net a small fortune. Already enough oak sticks have been burned to warm the half of a city's poor during a winter. From the opposite side of the Columbia river has recently come the smoke of a great fire which must have destroyed acres of timber as it ate its way through the wilderness. After sunset the conflagration flared high in great forks or formed an enormous red patch against the curtain of the night, and, as it burned, left in its wake a blackened waste of woodland; perchance some ruined homes. On many evenings one enormous pile of logs and brush on my clearing

would be lighted. These fires burned fiercely all night, tended carefully by a laborer, lest a flying spark ignite a neighbor's woods. On bon-fire evenings I would squat on a boulder and watch the pictures formed by the flaming wood. They were kaleidoscopic. Sometimes a log would look like the hound of the Baskervilles with fire coming from its nostrils and its eyes. Then the glowing wood would suddenly change to the semblance of a burning city. The next moment some detached section of wood would fall and, in place of the city, would be a hapless ship tossing on a sea of flame. During one of these evenings there floated to our ears from across de Petrio Canyon, the noise of tom-toms and the shouting of many voices. The Kluclitats were having some sort of celebration: a feast, a marriage, perchance a funeral. Whatever it might be, I wanted to attend it. But Seldie promptly discouraged me. Having lived for years among these aborigines, she views them from a practical standpoint and sees them merely as grafters of untidy and lazy habits. To my less experienced vision they appear picturesque and intensely interesting. For many months I have been anxiously awaiting an opportunity to witness an Indian social function, and to have missed one taking place within walking distance was a bitter disappointment. But I am not inconsolable, having long ago realized that few of the dis-

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appointments which come to us in this world are worth feeling very badly about.

Seldie is better content here than I had, at times, dared to hope that she would be. That is because she is "a slave to a harem of hens and turkeys wished upon us by Mrs. Tanner," to quote a complaint that Seldie has been making nearly every day for months. In consequence she now has nearly a hundred chickens and fully fifty young turkeys to "worry" her. These she keeps in separate yards, close to the house and not far from a well dug during the summer and partially filled with seepage water. A third "worry" is a pair of pigs—donated by Montmorenci Jones, the real estate man whom Seldie terms her business representative. Occasionally Mr. Tanner remarks cryptically that Jones' conscience must prick him whenever he thinks about Seldie's home "forty," but he is careful not to make this comment within her hearing, and it is not my business to probe for its meaning. The pigs reside on a ten-acre patch at some distance from the shack, and, although the land is mine, the fence enclosing it, as well as those shutting in the poultry, was erected by Seldie at a total cost of one hundred dollars, advanced by Mr. Tanner. She expects to make the amount of the loan from the sale of fresh eggs and chickens during the coming winter, and to eventually sell the fences to me.

One might suppose that time would hang heavily upon our hands. Truth to tell the days are not long enough for us to accomplish all that we would like to do about the place or within the shack. Looking after the poultry, sheep and pigs keeps us busy from sunrise to sunset. During the evening we are sufficiently amused with books and periodicals. And once during each twenty-four hours I have to tell Seldie's fortune with the cards. To make her fate a little different each time is becoming rather a strain upon the imagination. Seldie is constantly adding comforts to the shack's furnishings. She crocheted the rag rugs partly covering the floors of slender matched boards, made the tables and the couches in our living-room, and has softened every seat in the house with a pine-needle-filled mattress or a cushion. Often while Seldie is sewing by the light of the big lamp, I am surreptitiously figuring with pencil on paper. Last evening, after a careful perusal of a real estate bulletin from Montmorenci Jones, I estimated that at the rate land values in Klickitat county are jumping, this quarter section should, after another year, be worth fifty dollars per acre. Not that I wish to sell out. Perish that thought! The view of Mount Hood would suffice to hold me here.

Because I like to view the great white peak from every possible vantage point, I take time for a walk

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every afternoon, leaving Seldie to contend with the "worries" and have a perfectly beautiful time scolding at them. Whenever allowed to go with me, Col-lie indicates that his favorite ramble is a wagon track winding up and down the sides of a canyon for nearly a mile before joining the county road. The way lies among huge pines, glades of scrub oak and clumps of bushes, and though pretending to act as escort, the dog always is rushing madly ahead or plunging into thickets in chase of squirrels, lizards or birds. Sometimes he will raise a half-dozen partridge, making the poor creatures flutter hysterically before they begin to fly, screaming shrilly, over the tree-tops. He gets absurdly excited whenever he trees a squirrel, and barks so loudly that there might be just complaints from neighbors were there any living within hearing of his voice. Though the dog is often out of sight, he never roams beyond sound of my voice and scarcely a minute after a call comes dashing back to the first bend of the track, where he waits with eager eyes, upraised head and active tail until assured that he is seen. Then he is off again, darting through the brush like a tawny streak, his waving, plumelike tail glinting amongst the foliage.

Shamelessly do I confess to an arrant cowardliness, which, time and again, impels me to make wide detours at sight of herds of roaming cattle, and to avoid strange trails, lest I encounter a bear. The

bruin of this region is contemptuously described by the settlers as a "little black pig," worthy only of derision. Yet sundry pelts exhibited at Baldwin must have warmed animals many sizes larger than a full-grown porker. It may be that a resident member of the Bruin family would become panic stricken at the spectacle of a woman in a blue calico frock and a dog in a yellow-red coat, but there is an off chance that it would not. Only once have I been seriously alarmed while walking in the forest and on that occasion the fright was caused by Collie's nervous behavior. He leaped suddenly from the top of a high bank at one side of the wagon track, and raced madly away, as though something were pursuing him. After a time he ventured part way back, and, stopping at a distance of about fifty feet, regarded me anxiously as though saying: "Now you're exactly opposite to the place where I jumped and you'll never get past it alive!" Then he howled dismally. Nevertheless, there was no other means of reaching home. So I grasped my stick firmly, walked briskly forward, and—nothing happened. Collie may have encountered a cougar that day, for the same night the howl of one of these animals came from the direction of the lower well. This creature's cry is like that of a despairing woman—as portrayed on the stage. It may be, as Seldie maintains, that the souls of women who believe themselves to be eternally damned, enter

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into the bodies of cougars. Why victimize the cougars?

Collie delights to chase Indian ponies, and, whenever he comes upon a herd, sends them scampering madly along the road. Once started upon this reckless sport, it is impossible to reduce him to order, as he never desists until thoroughly fatigued. The other day, however, an Indian pony, aroused to just wrath by the dog's behavior, and probably ashamed of being driven like a frightened lamb by a yellow-red animal not one-quarter of his size, turned, stopped in the center of the road, and stared intently at his pursuer. Collie also stopped for a moment, then again rushed forward and instantly the frantic gallop was resumed by all save the rear pony. That one waited until the dog began to bark beside his legs, then suddenly wheeled and plunged forward with forefeet upraised, prepared to plant them upon his tormentor's back with a force which inevitably would have crushed him. The instinct of self-preservation sent Collie headlong into a thicket too dense for the pony to negotiate. For several moments the would-be avenger stood statue still; then, realizing that his enemy's retreat was impregnable against attack, trotted after the rest of the herd. Not until the noise of their hoofs' impact had ceased did Collie venture from his fortress. Nevertheless, this fright did not teach him a lesson, for, a half-hour later, he

chased a second herd of ponies, and, as it chanced, directly toward their owner. The Indian, on horseback, of course, had been spared a long and wearisome search by Collie, and, in recognition of his service, bestowed upon him a patronizing pat, a caress promptly resented by his own dog, a jealous wolf-mongrel, which snapped viciously at the stranger canine. This attack was at once punished by a five-year-old boy whom the Indian had lifted from the pony. The mite, striking at the cur with a stout little stick, sent it howling away. Then, turning and addressing me, introduced himself: "Me Jim. Me big Injun man!"

Seton Postley would term the Tanner family a "group of uniques," and were he now here would have chances a-plenty to study them. The ancient pioneer—restless ever since selling his store at Baldwin—has recently started, in a small way, a similar business at Fruitdale, a settlement six miles north of Mira-Monte, and, unless greatly hurried, stops here when going to or coming from the store, which is under the direct supervision of his third daughter, Edith. The other day—the one set by Richard as the date of his probable arrival here—Collie ushered in Mr. and Mrs. Tanner and Miss Edith, who, ultimately, were persuaded to remain for a luncheon of fresh eggs and new potatoes—home products—supplemented by tinned soup and canned peaches from

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the emergency stores. In the course of the world-round travels planned for Seton by his mother, he will encounter few persons so interesting as are the Tanners. The father is a humorist-philosopher, the mother has a fund of reminiscence of Pacific Northwest pioneer life which she relates graphically in picturesque diction, and the daughter enriches her conversation with naïve common-sense comments. Like her three sisters, Edith Tanner has thick, fine, dull, black hair framing small, regular features; a clear brunette complexion, and big, bright, expressive, blue eyes. These four young women are thoroughly educated. When scarcely more than toddlers, they were sent to the Holy Name Convent at The Dalles, Oregon, and, after being graduated by the nuns, went to a Portland commercial college. During the long vacations passed at the parental sheep ranch of six thousand acres, they learned the domestic arts from their mother, and the art of managing horses from their father. Consequently, they are skilled housekeepers and horse-breakers, in addition to having the accomplishments of gentlewomen and the practical training of business women. Mr. Tanner has started each of his daughters in an independent business by giving them a share of his large estate now instead of clinging to it until death forces him to loosen his grip. The youngest daughter is the real owner of the new store at Fruitdale; the second

and third daughters have orchards, developed under their personal supervision, and ten years ago the eldest daughter, then a bride, began to raise sheep on a few hundred acres of grass land. She and her husband started their married life in a small shack, and their business with a few head of sheep. There were no servants to pay, because none were to be had in that region, and no neighbors to visit, entertain and dress for, because in the sheep sections each range usually includes several thousand acres, and individual holdings include miles of territory. Nearly all of the income earned by this ambitious young couple was devoted to the purchase of additional property. Yet the years passed in that region were not unspeakably lonely, according to Edith Tanner, who explained that "there was always too much for two persons to do." By the time that the second baby had arrived, there was more than enough to occupy the time of three persons, so the young mother sent for her sister Edith.

A sheep range fifteen miles from a village, and two miles from a neighbor could scarcely have been a lively abiding place for a girl just released from school. Apparently, the environment did not bore Miss Tanner, as she remained in it for eighteen consecutive months. One day while alone on the ranch, she went into a cellar of the sort having an outside door leading from the yard, and there discovered

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an Indian deliberately emptying a box of its contents and setting at one side whatever articles appealed to his fancy. When asked what he was doing, the aborigine replied with a grunt, and when ordered away, he sullenly departed, the while uttering fiercer grunts. Nevertheless, Miss Tanner's voice and manner were sufficiently effective, whereas I should so plainly have registered fear that the termination of the interview would have found the Indian in possession of the ranch, and I fleeing to the nearest white neighbor. Miss Tanner casually remarked that, "of course, the Indian was drunk and didn't know what he was doing." Yet any frontier-reared girl knows that an intoxicated aborigine is a fearsome and reckless creature. While his daughter was describing sheep-ranch life, her father, roaming about the living room, paused before a photograph of Seton Postley, and finally handed it to his wife. She nodded approval: "A nice-looking boy; sure to amount to something," was her verdict.

"Unless the fortune that he hasn't been obliged to earn for himself does not spoil him," said Seldie, who at times is a bit pessimistic.

"Get him to bring some of that fortune out this way and help to develop the region. And marry one of its girls. They can't be beat anywheres," boasted the old pioneer.

This time Mrs. Tanner shook her head: "That sort of boy wouldn't fancy a western-bred girl."

"You never can tell what sort of girl a feller'll fancy." The father of Miss Edith chuckled softly. "It's liable to be anyone—born anywhere—who's hard to get. That's the only sure rule to go by. Them kind of matters ain't any different back east than they are in the west."

Mrs. Tanner has never been "back east." She was born in Salem, Oregon, shortly after the arrival there of her Swiss-American parents, who, during 1847, migrated to the Pacific Northwest from Indiana. In her babyhood she underwent the most severe privations of frontier life, as it was several years before the settlers were able to procure properly prepared flour. Often they were without coffee, pork, eggs and tea, while for lack of fresh vegetables, fruit and meat, nearly all of those early pioneers suffered with scurvy. Under this affliction they usually lost their fingernails temporarily, and, not infrequently, their teeth permanently. During the fourth summer following their marriage, the Tanners moved to a portion of Washington infested with discontented, uneasy and hostile Indians. As the husband's business frequently called him away from home for long periods, the wife, her two-year-old child, an infant in arms, and a half-grown girl who

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helped with the housework, were alone at the ranch. And because there were no neighbors near enough to help her in case of an Indian attack, Mrs. Tanner had planned to go out of one door while the marauders were breaking down the other, and, with her children, hide in the tall corn growing on the clearing.

"Had you a dog?" asked Seldie.

"No," was the reply. "Of course, I should have had one."

Seldie shook her head: "It was better not to have one—anyhow a dog like Collie who would have followed you so devotedly that he would have led the marauders straight to your hiding-place."

For fourteen years Mrs. Tanner lived in that lonely home, bearing and rearing children, and rarely encountering any of her white neighbors. But the red neighbors came often to the house, and, in times of illness, assumed both the nursing and the domestic work. "I never shall forget the kindness of those Indian women," she said. "They were willing to do anything for me; as much as any white friends I've ever had. Don't you let anybody prejudice you against these Klickitats," she added, as her husband assisted her into their "hack." "They're kind-hearted, loyal friends so long as they believe that you are straightforward with them and mean to keep

your promises. It's astonishing how keenly they can read character. I know all the Indian women living near here, and you may safely make friends of them."

The Tanners waved good-bye and drove away only a half-hour before the arrival of Richard, who, reaching Baldwin at noon, had wasted no time in hiring a man to drive him here. His admiration for the scenery was boundless, his opinion of my apple-raising scheme was reserved, and his scorn for a person who would buy a quarter section of land without even asking if it included a well or a reliable spring was—funny. It was interesting to watch Seldie studying Richard when she believed herself to be unobserved. But not until late that night did she voice her opinion: "Mr. Van Cortlandt looks like some of the retired British army officers who used to come into the dressmaking shop—with their womenfolks—where I worked in Victoria, British Columbia. No one would ever mistake him for a Yankee."

"For Heaven's sake!" I exclaimed. "Never let my brother guess that you think he looks other than a typical American. That's his proudest boast—being an American—though more than half of his life has been passed away from his native land."

"Well, whatever he wants to be like or doesn't want to be like, he can't scare me with his grand man-

ners and his book talk," retorted Seldie, as she blew out her candle. "I sha'n't change my ways one mite on account of him."

"Your friend is so absolutely natural and so free of pretence, that no one could help liking her," remarked Richard next morning. "It's a relief to meet a woman of her sort. One instantly senses her honesty."

As Seldie, fortunately, chanced to overhear Richard's estimate of her, she so willingly met his friendly advances that within the week they were fast friends. He was genuinely regretful when she began her preparations for leaving, and urged her to, at least, pass the remainder of the summer with us. But Seldie was firm about putting into execution her scheme for having a summer camp for city shop-girls to rest at, and commune with nature were they so inclined. To her practical mind the best site for the camp was a narrow strip of unoccupied land between the Golden-dale Railway tracks and the bank of the Big Klickitat river, about two miles north of Baldwin. Upon this land Seldie squatted, incidentally taking possession of a deserted log cabin to which no one thereabout laid claim. The house is used as a living-room, a large wall tent serves as a dressing-room, that tent's fly, supported by rough poles, is a sleeping-porch by night and a dining-room by day, and the cooking is accomplished over a fire built on several

large, flat stones. Seldie easily solved the water question by tapping a pipe running from the river to the railway company's power house. During the summer she had relays of boarders, chiefly girls from city shops, who gladly paid her seven dollars weekly for the privilege of living so close to nature. Seldie works very hard to make her boarders comfortable, and has far less leisure than would be hers were she to follow her trade, that of dressmaker and ladies' tailor. That she prefers dishwashing and cooking to the less laborious employment is an amazement to everybody hereabout, excepting Richard. Without claiming to possess remarkable acumen, he says that he can readily understand why a woman who had sewed steadily for a quarter of a century, must detest the sight of scissors, needles and thread reels, and find fascinating variety in serving simple fare to an ever-changing selection of paying guests.

CHAPTER V

HAD Richard been at hand at the time of my investment in Washington state real estate, he would have made absolutely certain that I was buying water as well as land. Times innumerable since coming here last summer he has assured me that my hasty investment proves conclusively to him that women are unfit to have the franchise (Washington long ago gave that privilege(?) to its women), since any glib-tongued real-estate broker seems able to talk their money from their pockets, and that the rule applies equally to a political speaker seeking the vote of the sex that is termed gentle. The Pacific Northwest land-serpent, who tempted me with a big, red apple, told the truth when he said that this quarter section would not need irrigation. It will not. And he certainly promised me a right-of-way through the property lying between mine and the county road. The latter promise, however, was not in the deed, and I learned shortly after coming here that Caleb Loring had always said that no one should ever have a right-of-way through his property. Nor will he sell his land save at a prohibitive price.

"Anyhow, you blundered into the right region," admits Richard. "In fact, you could scarcely have done better, for within six miles there is railway and steamboat transportation for the fruit—when there is any to market—and your orchard, on a hill three thousand feet above sea-level and surrounded by canyons, has drainage of air. This practically insures the trees against frost, because the heavier air settles in the canyons."

In addition the the air-drainage, the water is drained off from my hill orchard as it would not be were it located on low, flat land. Most of the orchardists in this country of the Klickitats prefer the northerly and easterly slopes of hills, because they are apt to warm up later in the spring, are a partial preventative against frosts and retard the blossoming period. Other growers contend, and with reason, that the southerly slopes, being earlier, give a longer growing season and receive much more sunshine. When the altitude is high, the southerly and easterly slopes are advisable, but usually the direction of the slope will not prove an important factor.

During the summer and autumn after Richard's arrival, the shack had seemed spacious, because so little of our time was passed inside of it. But with the first frosty weather and the arrival of a wagon-load of books, pictures, and antique furniture from the east, an extra room was absolutely necessary.

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Mr. Barney was only a few weeks engaged with the task of tacking this wing to the west end of the shack, and, because of the rows of book-shelves at one end of it, he christened it a library. Collie likes the new room because the Franklin stove's open front quickly dries his coat after he has been rolling in the snow. Seldie approves of the library, because its three windows, facing as many points of the compass, let in plenty of sunlight, and because a canned music machine—sent out by Seton Postley—plays only the liveliest of tunes. Nevertheless, she declines to return and pass this winter with us and is now on the eve of moving from her river camp into a city. "Not to work," as she haughtily informed her dearest foe, Mrs. Blacke-McCormick, when they encountered each other at Letter Box Grove, their customary duelling ground. Mrs. McCormick, the social leader of this region, had "guessed" that Seldie was planning to temporarily resume her trade in one of the cities about a hundred miles from here, but our friend insists upon posing as a woman of independent position and the ability to pay her way wherever she may choose to wander. Therefore, instead of passing this winter comfortably and economically in the Klickitat hills, she elects to go to Portland and enjoy the society which she finds in cheap lodging houses, and the still cheaper diversions afforded by the department shops and the motion-picture thea-

ters. Two-thirds of the twelve hundred dollars which Seldie received for her home, "forty" were owing to John Tanner for groceries, furniture and clothing; two hundred dollars were due to a Portland physician for advice and drugs, and the remainder to various friends who had advanced small sums during her five years of homesteading. By next spring she probably will not have a dollar remaining from the purchase price of her home "forty," and in all likelihood will be contracting fresh debts. She is, in fact, talking of mortgaging the remainder of her land, which is so situated that its value is rapidly increasing.

"At the end of five years you won't have a two-bit piece or an acre of land," warned Mr. Tanner, who drove through Letter Box Grove this morning, as we were waiting for the mail stage. "You're jest foolin' away your property, Seldie. Why don't you do a little mite of work—jest enough to keep out of debt until next spring?"

Seldie laughed. "What would be the sense of me trying to keep out of debt so long's there's a fool storekeeper in this district?"

"Even a fool storekeeper passes over some time or other," retorted the old pioneer. "And I'm pretty near seventy-five years old."

"There's a fool born every hour," said Seldie, who invariably has the final word in a tilt with a man.

Seldie is so busy with her preparations for leav-

ing that she declined to go with us to-day as far as the Swansens, from whom we customarily buy the small amount of butter that we need. Anyhow, she has always professed not to feel at home with them and for no reason other than that they are the only Danes she has ever encountered.

For seventeen years the Swansens have lived among the Klickitat hills, having migrated here from South Carolina, whither they had come two years before from their native Denmark. Their quarter section is a narrow strip of property lying between de Petrio Canyon and the main county road. The land is of indifferent quality, yet, for a decade, they easily made a living by running cattle over the surrounding lands, then unfenced and, therefore, free range. By degrees other homesteaders, taking up claims, built fences, and, with a too-restricted pasturage, the cattle-raising Danes ultimately found themselves dependent upon whatever money could be obtained by the sale of poultry, butter and eggs. During a residence of nearly two decades they have not cleared enough land to raise a marketable crop of grain or alfalfa. Meanwhile, scarcely any of their holding has been fenced, although they years ago proved up on the claim. Always when looking at that place, I mentally pat my own back, for, during the three years since I located here, my quarter section has been fenced in, ten acres of land are planted with

apple trees and five other acres have been slashed and burned over, then grubbed so thoroughly that never a meandering root remains. Early next spring they will be in readiness for ploughing and planting. This prospect so elates me that whenever I vocally compare the condition of my holding with that of the Danes', Richard sharply pulls me up by saying: "Don't forget that you had the money to pay for getting all that work done quickly by a big gang of Italians. The Swansens would have had to do everything with their own hands."

Whereupon I retort: "They've had that homestead for nearly twenty years, and should have that many acres cleared. You have often said that one man, unaided, should easily clear and plant an acre of land in a year's time."

Only when actually gazing upon Mira-Monte does it appear to be a stretch of almost unbroken forest, in many places so heavily covered with pine, oak and brush that it is impossible to see two rods in advance. When not actually before my physical eyes, I visualize it as a vast garden. It is hard for me to forgive the Swansens for not having been more industrious. The approach to their shack is extremely picturesque, whether one enters from the main road by turning into an avenue bordered by flowering bushes, or uses a forest trail and then crosses several roughly cleared fields. The homestead, embowered with

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bushes and nestling amid stately oaks, is immediately surrounded by a formal, foreign-looking garden of old-fashioned perennials, divided by field stone-bordered paths. Beyond the picket fence, which encloses the garden, is the barn-yard and its hip-roofed wagon, horse and cow sheds; also slat-fenced runs for fowl and swine—a bit of the Old World farm life, framed by the wild scenery of the New World. The owners of the place harmonize with it. The wife, who speaks English indifferently, is a seventy-year-old woman of squat, square figure, and wears the peasant garb of her native land. Soft, fine, lint-white hair is drawn tightly back from her wrinkled face, where linger patches of pink upon a skin fair in contrast with her deeply tanned, work-distorted hands. Her husband is also squat, square and blond. Because his father served in some capacity at the country estate of Queen Alexandra's parents, it is not surprising that this Danish peasant's manners are those of a courtier, for he must have come into contact with many a personage. In the living-room of his home hangs a chromo portrait of England's Queen Mother, done nearly forty years ago.

"I saw her drive through Hyde Park last Alexandra Day," remarked Richard, as we all stood before the unframed chromo, "and, to my eyes, she seemed slender, fair and young."

"She is like her mother, Queen Louise," the old

Dane replied in tones almost reverential. "I saw her often—at home—and she looked always beautiful and young. The women of our royal family do not grow old—ever."

With the Swansens live a widowed daughter and her ten-year-old son. The child has the vacant, melancholy expression of the mentally undeveloped, but he has imbibed the courtly manner of his grandsire, and is the only lad in this region who doffs his hat when he meets a woman. The widow cherishes a pathetically deep affection for her afflicted child who represents her brief, youthful romance. She might easily have found another husband in this pioneer region where women are scarce, for she is a decidedly pretty, ethereal-looking blonde, with a girlish manner and a soft, low voice. With her son she occupies a two-room addition to the kitchen wing of her parents' shack, across the front of which is a veranda partly built about a huge oak, whose trunk, running up through the flooring, forms an inconveniently located pillar, which, piercing the roof, spreads wide, protecting branches above it. So rarely are trees permitted to remain near a settler's homestead that I asked the Danes' daughter how this one chanced to escape the axe.

"Mamma said that she would rather do without the veranda than to lose that tree," replied the widow. "At home—in Denmark—there were trees—

old trees—all about our house. We missed them here. No,” shaking her blonde head—“mamma would not let this one be cut down, although papa said at first that it must surely be destroyed.”

After a moment of silence, she went on: “My husband liked trees, too. There were many of them about our home.” She stared straight ahead, as though she were looking at that over-seas home in the Old World instead of across a mountain canyon of the New World. “But we were not long married or he much with me. He was a sea captain, always sailing the Atlantic. I met him in North Carolina, but was in Denmark when papa and mamma and the rest of the family moved here. When my husband—died”—the word came with an effort—“at sea, I could not bear to remain in the home that he had made for me, or to sell the furniture that he had bought for it. So I left it with friends—here a little, there a little. They said they could promise to keep it for ten years, anyhow. It’s eleven years since I left the old country. Perhaps I shall never go back there. It is so long a journey and my little boy is—nervous.”

The widow’s parents have recently had an offer of four thousand dollars for a portion of their quarter section, and the sum seems a fortune to the pair of ancient Danes who never have had more than a few hundred dollars at one time. Their daughter

owns a quarter section, acquired under the homestead laws, although the neighbors say that she actually did not live upon the place, because the land commissioners strained a point in her case, and allowed her to stay with her parents because of their advanced age, instead of insisting that she sleep on the section every night for five years. The chances are, however, that she obeyed the law to the letter. She does, as a matter of fact, occasionally leave home to sew for friends at Baldwin, Hood River, White Salmon, and other villages along the Columbia, and thus earns a little money as well as the beneficial effects of a change of air and scene.

A quarter section adjoining the property of the elderly Danes belongs to a married son. He and his wife have three small daughters—Thora, Mabel and Hazel. Every well-regulated Pacific Northwest family includes a Hazel. The mother of these three Danish-Americans is ambitious to dress them precisely alike, but a limited income forces her to garb them by a system of descent. The frock worn last year by the oldest girl is now the property of the second daughter, and next season will descend to the youngest sister. As this rule is applied to all of their garments, only the wardrobe of Thora is ever considered. This economic arrangement will prove practicable for so long as the three young Swansens continue to develope proportionately, and would be

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totally upset were Mabel or Hazel to suddenly grow taller or broader than the elder sister. Instead of living in the comfortable frame house on their ranch, the younger family of Danes crowds itself into a wall tent at Baldwin, where, as Mrs. Swansen expresses it, "There's *some* society."

CHAPTER VI

ONE of many enthusiastically worded screeds sent by us to the East has borne fruit in the form of a letter from Seton Postley, stating that we may shortly expect him here for a long visit. Ever since the receipt of this news I have been wondering why he did not elect to summer at Bar Harbor with his aunt and his débutante cousin instead of among the Klickitat hills with his godmother and her semi-invalid brother. It is quite possible that Seton's mother—a hard-headed, worldly wise widow, encouraged him to come here in order to prevent him—a Princetonian of susceptible age—from getting into an entanglement with one of the cradle-robbing girls who infest fashionable seaside resorts. While in this region the youthful scion of the house of Postley will be perfectly safe from the marring effects of an early marriage since everybody shall be led to suppose that he will have to make his own way after being graduated from college, instead of coming into possession of several millions of dollars on the twenty-first anniversary of his birth. Only an abnormal thirst for the novel will induce him to persist in "roughing it"

with us, since an important feature of that experience will be a sense of perpetual griminess. The bathtub, recently set up, has never been baptized, although connected by pipes with the upper well. That hole, which, last winter, held between seventy and eighty feet of seepage water, is now as dry as a prohibition county is supposed to be—by a few persons. As all the water now consumed by us must be taken from the lower well, I have begun to realize how vast is the difference between carrying it for a quarter of a mile and turning a tap in the kitchen. For the first time in my life I can appreciate the importance of a fluid which I had erroneously considered as free as salvation. Anyhow, in this Klickitat wilderness, salvation is never discussed, and water is so scarce—because of this unprecedented season of drought—that every bucketful is jealously husbanded. Those persons who have a supply of water do not give any away if they can decently avoid doing so. A spring well here is a mark of aristocracy more convincing than an ivy-draped castle in the Old World. I would rather possess a source of unlimited water than the privilege of remaining seated in the presence of a royalty.

With one member of this household aristocratic—even royal—birth would count for naught. Collie does not discriminate between persons and would welcome a tramp as effusively as he does his oldest

friends. He is perfectly charmed to meet anybody, and we have long ceased to expect him to frighten away undesirable visitors. But his appearance is impressive and that counts for as much in the case of a dog as it does in the case of a great many absolutely unimportant humans. Anyhow, having no other watchdog, Richard and I have made Collie to understand that whenever we leave the place together, he is to remain close to the shack. He always accompanies us to the bar-gate separating the driveway from the various trails through the woods, and from the illegal wagon track connecting this Paradise with the outer world. Supplies and visitors are hauled over this apology for a road, illegally slashed through the forest of a non-resident homesteader. She will be perfectly justified in closing it to us so soon as she learns of the trespassing. Probably Collie remains at home during our absences, for he always is at the gate when we return, welcoming us with joyous barks and tail-waggings. Then he proceeds with us to the shack, dancing along in advance, a smiling face turned toward us, and progressing solely on his hind legs.

Because Seton Postley had written that he would arrive some time within a fortnight, for the week after receiving that letter I continued my practice of going for a long ramble. Scarcely had I returned home from one of these excursions on the afternoon

of the sixth day following the announcement of Seton's coming, and had begun to make preparations for tea, than Collie, barking excitedly, rushed toward the bar-gate. Such behavior on the dog's part is an unfailing sign of approaching visitors, and a few moments later a high phaeton, rocking like a ship in a storm, was seen navigating the wagon track. Behind the heads of the two brown cayuses drawing the vehicle, appeared the shock of white hair thatching the head of Mr. John Tanner, who habitually goes hatless and generally coatless. A long, white beard lends the pioneer a patriarchal appearance oddly at variance with his black cotton shirt and the white "galluses," which draw his trousers far above the normal waist line. He innocently goes in for Empire effects. At one side of our sturdy old friend sat Philip Trevor, otherwise Collie's "bone man," and at the other side a blond youth of assured, yet modest bearing. Seton Postley had arrived at Mira-Monte. No psychic sense told me that before six months had passed I would be glad to see him leaving it.

Prior to Seton's arrival we had often wondered how he was to be amused, but he solved that problem for himself by doing whatever he was impelled to do and without confiding his plans to anyone. Shortly after depositing his luggage in the room occupied by Richard and whatever men visit us, Seton re-

marked that he would take a look about the place. As Mr. Tanner was chatting in his customarily unique fashion, while drinking a cup of tea, I merely noticed that the Princetonian paused for a moment near the horses which were tied to an oak tree close to the house, and then forgot all about him until just before dinner when Philip Trevor, who had been industriously plying Collie with bones, asked what had become of our guest.

"He went to look about the place almost as soon as he arrived," I replied.

"That was two hours ago and now it is almost dark," said Philip Trevor.

"Someone should have warned him against going beyond the yard!" I exclaimed, forgetting that in an eighty-acre yard, most of it heavily wooded, a stranger might readily get lost. "Seton! Seton!"

"Seton! Seton!" echoed Philip Trevor, greatly worried lest the lad, lured by the fascinations of the primeval forest, had wandered beyond sound of our voices. "Perhaps he's lost his bearings, tried to follow a cattle trail, and wandered across the canyon," he added in distressed tones. "He's only a boy."

Two minutes later, and, greatly to our relief, Seton came running up the trail from the lower well. In one hand he held a long stick equipped with a horsehair lasso. "I've been at the brushpile on the edge of the woods catching lizards," he explained

gleefully, at the same time taking from his coat-pocket several of the reptiles. "Where's the fighting cat that you've been bragging about in your letters, April Godmother? These are for her. Why! I thought she'd have a head as big as this," he added, the while making a huge ball of his two hands and viewing with disappointment the rather diminutive cranium of Pussy Mother, who had hastened forward in response to a call, which she hoped meant an invitation to dine. "She don't look like a fighter, but I guess she's all right." He stroked the cat's thin sides and the two promptly became friends. But Seton made her earn her feast of lizards by giving the unfortunate prisoners a short start on the edge of the clearing, and then treacherously freeing their enemy.

"Something wrong with the pipes in here, April Godmother!" called out Seton later that evening from the bathroom, where, in good faith, he had gone for a plunge. He ultimately removed the grime of his day's journey with a quart of warm water from the tank of the kitchen range.

Not only is Seton Postley a thoroughly satisfactory guest, but he is a self-appointed butler and parlor maid as well. He never forgets to smoothly lay the cloth for a meal, and, after it is over with, to sweep the floor of the living-room, dry the dishes and put them on the shelves in the lean-to kitchen. From

the beginning Collie expressed cordial approval of this blond-haired, blue-eyed lad, whose weight is so out of proportion to his five feet, eleven inches of stature that he looks inordinately thin, and gives the impression of a delicacy of physique which is belied by his athletic prowess. While the dog's advances are kindly received, it is evident that Seton's affections center upon Pussy Mother. He agrees with Richard that her offspring are a great nuisance and seem always to be under foot. These five kittens, the third family which she has supplied, are as selfish, lazy, altogether worthless as were those that preceded them. And, according to her custom, Pussy is slavishly devoted. We would like to be rid of the quintette, but, having weakly put off their fatal day, have now ceased to talk about drowning them. The little creatures regard us expectantly with bright eyes and an air of confidence in our friendliness, which is wholly misplaced. Little do they dream that we are merely awaiting an opportunity to give them away.

On the evening after his arrival, Seton announced his intention to go fishing every day. He changed his mind after realizing that to reach the Big Klickitat's brink he must descend a razor-back bluff, which is not a nice thing to travel over, although that means of getting down to the river is preferable to descending fifteen hundred feet of sheer cliff. Seton is an

expert shot, and to go out with him greatly entertains Collie, who likes nothing better than to raise a flock of partridge and send them scurrying skyward. In the very early morning these birds may be potted from the back window of the shack, as they approach in search of food—if Collie is not about. That he does wander away from the ranch between twilight and dawn is evidenced by the bits of worn-out harness and straps, which we find about the place. He necessarily picks these things up near the stables of our neighbors, since we have never acquired horses because of not being certain of having sufficient water for them; also because, to date, it has been possible to employ a plowman owning a team.

Although Seton may be able to endure our Spartan economies in regard to water, he certainly will not be able to stand the monotony of our menus unless he differs radically from previous guests, several of whom came here with the avowed intention of stopping for a month and departed within the week. Moreover, I am “a cook inspired by the Devil,” declares Richard, who, having roughed it in a score of heathenish lands, is an authority on bad cooking. My culinary failures greatly amuse him, but, were his sense of humor invalidated as well as his muscles, he would long since have deserted this wilderness lodge. Most of our guests begin their visit by going into raptures over the invigorating air, the magnificent

scenery and the restful solitude of what they are pleased to term "this corner of the world." Why they term it a corner is hard to imagine since nowhere about it is there anything so unlovely as an angle. These enthusiasts soon become so boring to listen to that it is fortunate they soon weary of a place certain to pall upon anyone whose happiness depends upon a regular supply of fresh vegetables, fruit and meat. The first day after arriving, the visitors appear to really enjoy a breakfast of boiled cereal and tinned cream, a luncheon of potatoes and smoked beef, and a dinner of baked beans and coffee. When these menus have been repeated the next day and on one following it, the guests suddenly remember urgent business or invent some equally flimsy excuse. By that time, however, we have become so utterly wearied of persons who cannot entertain themselves for five consecutive minutes, that were they to knock us down and make their adieux during our succeeding period of unconsciousness, we should regard the procedure as exceedingly diplomatic and an evidence of superior breeding.

Usually we accompany each one of these departing pilgrims to the boat-landing, and stake them to a dinner at the Baldwin hotel, thus laying the final straw upon their load of Klickitat miseries. The menu at the hostelry is longer than any of those served here, but the ingredients of the dishes are dark

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mysteries and swarms of flies dispute possession of them.

Seton has already tasted the joys of the Hotel Baldwin, because his first fortnight in Kluclitit was broken by a trip to Portland with Richard. In order to have plenty of time for resting during the long and rough walk to the village, where they were to board a west-bound Columbia river steamer, they started soon after breakfast. I walked with them to the edge of the west "eighty"—a fenced-in stretch of heavily wooded land—and then returned to the home "forty." For the first time since coming here I was to stay absolutely alone, and on my homeward way, I recalled, with some amusement, Richard's final instruction: "There isn't the slightest danger—unless you set the shack on fire; nor a probability of anyone coming to the ranch at night——"

"Don't I know that? Think of the months and months that Seldie and I were here before you came!"

"But you may as well keep the revolver beside your bed," he continued, ignoring my interruption. "It will give you confidence in case you *imagine* that someone is prowling about the shack. And the instant he tries to break in a door—shoot straight through it!"

Long before I had reached the bar-gate, I could hear Collie howling mournfully, as he always does

when he fancies that he has been prematurely deserted as on that morning when the entire household, each member of it carrying a bundle, had departed by a rarely used trail. To his canine intelligence that procedure spells permanent desertion. We two spent the remainder of that day in the tea house, a small, open-sided tent, draped with gaily striped East Indian cotton rugs—the sort sold in the Orient for a few cents—set up in a grove opposite to the rose-bordered vegetable garden. As the tea-house faces the west and Mt. Hood, it is our favorite retreat at twilight. That evening Collie and I lingered there until the glow had wholly faded from behind the western hills.

To be alone in a shack on a hilltop fully a mile from the nearest neighbor is an odd sensation for a city-bred woman. It was not a fear-inspiring one, as no stranger had ever come to the ranch at night. Moreover, the shack is so far from the main road that anyone not familiar with the forest trails leading to it would scarcely be able to follow one of them after darkness had fairly set in. For several hours after supper, Collie dozed contentedly at my feet, the while I read a book about farming, which seems to me to be an inexhaustible subject since I myself have become a farmerette. Certainly opportunities to acquire a store of valuable knowledge about fruit-growing are within the reach of all per-

sons interested in the business. The Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C., and the State Colleges, supply, on request, free bulletins on all departments of farm work. There are also many splendid books published on horticulture: these, in themselves, would seem to be complete guides to success. Of course, the more an orchardist knows about agriculture the more likely she—and he—is to succeed, but it is better to imitate the methods of successful fruit-growers in the section where one is located than to try to follow the ideas which were, more or less, suitable in other localities.

My agricultural education was suddenly interrupted by Collie, who awakened, sprang up, stationed himself before the front door, and barked sharply. Doubtless, his keen ears had heard some sound from without, but, as I could not hear any footsteps, I opened the door. Instantly springing out, the dog plunged into the darkness, concealing the landscape as completely as though a black velvet curtain had been let down to earth from heaven. As I was about to close the door, a flame, leaping up in the west, momentarily grew larger, showing that a fire burned on the opposite side of the canyon. At first I assumed that a forest conflagration was beginning, then reason suggested that a settler, taking advantage of a windless evening, was burning brush, albeit before the legal time, which is after the autumn rains.

From a window, I watched while the fire cast wierd shadows against the sky. Soon after midnight the flames began to flicker, then fading, finally disappeared. Shortly afterward Collie scratched at the door. He was promptly admitted. I preferred to have him inside of the shack, as he would be certain to bark furiously were he to hear a noise, whereas, if allowed outside, he might be quieted by a word or a caress, for he is unsuspicious of all strangers and readily makes friends with them. Possibly this unwatchmanlike quality is due to his isolated life. Richard maintains that it is because the various gangs of Italians and Swedes, who have worked about this place, "made fools of themselves over the dog solely because of his good looks." Certain it is that as a watcher, Collie is a failure. But his trust in human nature and his readiness to forgive injuries are a reproach to the world-worn and the cynical.

After a final inspection of the little house and a testing of the catches securing its eight windows, I locked Collie in the lean-to, and, having placed matches and the revolver within reach, extinguished the candles and was soon asleep. The sun was high when I awoke. Collie was barking near the kitchen door in his eagerness to get out of the house and greet Mr. Barney, who had brought to me two pails of water from the lower well.

"When I see that fire in the night, I was for start-

ing over here," said the foreman. "Then I remembered that Duthey (a Hollander), across the canyon, spoke last week of burning brush the first still evenin'. It's like you'd been scared if you'd heard anyone comin' in the night."

While Mr. Barney was in the storeroom looking for a tool, the Indian, whose horses Collie had unconsciously driven in the right direction, appeared at the bar-gate. Perched before him on the cayuse was the little lad who had taken Collie's part on the occasion of their first encounter. As the father began to explain that his son had come to see the white squaw's yellow dog, the little fellow held up a small, brown hand badly lacerated by recent contact with barbed-wire fencing. After the wounds had been bathed with peroxide of hydrogen, soothed with sweet oil, and bound with lint, little Jim was made happy by the gift of one of the kittens. The treasure was handed him by Mr. Barney, who remarked to me *sotto voce*: "That's one of them young devils out of the way of our feet when we're working about the upper well." After the two Jims had departed—the mite promising to take good care of the kitten and to soon repeat his visit—Mr. Barney, who has a genius for learning all that there is to know about our neighbors, said that little Jim's mother is Squaw Sally, who recently left home after a quarrel with her brave. "'Twarn't big Jim's fault. He ain't no

common Injun. He treated his wife good, but her folks was always comin' to visit them. If they'd stayed to home, Jimmy an' Sally'd got along fine. You see how him an' that kid's stuck to each other. They're bein' did for now by Big Jim's sister, Josie Skookem, a widow squaw, an' her twelve-year-old girl. The hull of 'em lives on that ranch jest this side of Baldwin."

"Too bad they don't live nearer to this place. They would be interesting neighbors."

Mr. Barney frankly expressed his amazement: "Hankerin' for Injun society an' never visitin' none of your white neighbors! Anyone would think you'd like civilized folks best, bein' as you was raised among 'em."

"A good reason for wanting to cultivate aborigines," I retorted, to the foreman's still greater bewilderment.

CHAPTER VII

THE two days following that on which Little Jim made his call here were devoted to cleaning the shack, shifting about its furniture, polishing the sconces and other brasses, and hanging fresh window curtains. This activity was a fortunate impulse upon which I congratulated myself on the afternoon of the third day, when a series of frantic barks from the direction of the bar-gate announced visitors. Collie was expressing his welcome by jumping about Philip Trevor and Seton Postley, who were trying to swing back the heavy bars without hitting him. In Mr. Tanner's hack, as a two-seated, coverless vehicle is termed hereabout, sat Mrs. Margery Trevor. Beside her was Richard. He was laughing at the dog's antics, albeit feeling a bit miffed because some of the demonstrations of delight were not directed toward himself. The outfit's driver, a thirteen-year-old lad, returned my "Hello, Sonny!" with a grave dignity that was disconcerting. The personality of this lad was our chief topic of conversation during that evening. This was due, in part, to the fact that he was naturally bright, but more particularly because, despite

his tender age, he had been supporting himself for several years. Throughout the drive from the boat-landing, his four passengers had been greatly entertained by his comments upon Baldwin, its leading citizens, its surrounding country, and, incidentally, his own parents. These latter he described as a "couple of old chickens, always scratching around, and never doing anything." The Trevors were so impressed by the little man's intelligence that they wanted to help him to get an education by boarding and lodging him at their home in Portland, the while he attended a public school. Seton offered to supply the necessary clothing and books. Two days later, however, when Philip Trevor, on his return trip, searched Baldwin for the lad, he could only learn that he had gone away. His further life will, doubtless, ever remain shrouded in mystery so far as we at Mira-Monte are concerned. It was during this visit to Baldwin, whither I escorted Philip Trevor, that I first saw Josie Skookem, sister and aunt, respectively, of the two Jims, and acknowledged leader of Klickitat aboriginal society. Our friendship began with a violent aversion on the part of the squaw. I had carried my kodak into the village in the hope of snapping any Indians who might be loitering thereabout, and, unaware of their prejudice against being photographed, innocently tried to get a picture of Josie, as she was alighting from her cayuse

under the shade of a tree. Simultaneously, she caught sight of me, and, before I could get a second shot, had darted behind the tree, whose slender trunk failed to conceal her substantial, brightly dressed figure. After several moments she again came into full view, this time armed with a stout stick, which she waved in so threatening a manner as she pattered past me, the while scowling and grunting wrathfully, that she instantly won my respect. She walked into the store, came out again, and then circled its exterior, as though in search of someone. Finally she turned down a side street—so-called—leading to the Columbia. I had just regained sufficient confidence to seat myself upon the edge of the store's veranda, when the patter of moccasined feet impelled me to spring up and right about face, having no fancy for being attacked from the rear. My propitiatory smile and word were received with a scowl by Josie, as she hastened toward Mr. Tanner, who had just emerged from a shack a rod or two distant. The two immediately engaged in an animated conversation, and, surmising that it concerned myself, I joined them. After formally introducing me to the squaw, Mr. Tanner said: "Now, Josie, you mustn't be mad with this woman; she's my friend, I'm your friend, so you and she must be friends."

"I be your friend," promised Josie, taking my hand after a moment of hesitancy, "but no like 'um pieter."

"This white woman won't try again to take your picture, Josie," promised the old trader. Whereupon, the squaw smiled contentedly, and began to chat volubly in Chinook, occasionally glancing toward me and using a word from her limited English vocabulary in polite effort to include me in the conversation. She managed to explain to me that Silver Hair, as she calls Mr. Tanner, is her good friend; that he trusts her for coffee, flour, sugar and tea when times are hard. She finally accepted an invitation to come and see me some time, and then said good-bye. As Josie mounted her cayuse and turned it homeward, Mr. Tanner remarked: "That squaw's a born Socialist. When she's in a talking humor, as she is once in a blue moon, her ideas on the subject are surprisin'. An' they're logical, too. She's a natural leader an' can influence any of her own people. For instance, two or three squaws will agree to do a certain amount of work for a settler, but if Josie hears about it an' don't approve, she'll talk to them for a while, and they'll do precisely as she says."

Josie is the first wife of a chief commonly known to the white members of the region as Skookem. But she does not reside upon his ranch, preferring, for some reason best known to herself, to live independently and to support her twelve-year-old daughter. It may safely be assumed that she is not the sort of person to tamely submit to the dictation of anyone;

as the chief is an aborigine of decided opinions and a forceful way of expressing them, it is easy to understand how seriously he and Josie would disagree. Mr. Tanner, who remembers Josie as a child, says that she is now barely thirty-five years of age. Because of her semi-withered features and the deep lines about her mouth and eyes, a stranger would put sixty summers and winters to her discredit—were that stranger a woman. This aged appearance of a comparatively youthful squaw is ascribed by the old pioneer to a life of hardship. It seems to me that in her semi-civilized state, conditions must be much easier for Josie than they were for her wholly uncivilized grandmothers who probably suffered untold hardships when fish and game were scarce, and there were no white neighbors from whom to borrow or beg food—synonymous terms in this instance.

Josie's objection to having her picture taken, Mr. Tanner explained, is one commonly shared by the older generation of Indians. They have a horror of being photographed because filled with the superstition that the possessor of the likeness of any individual gives that possessor a mysterious power over the person photographed.

Because of the dishonorable tricks to which both professional and amateur photographers resort, most Indians are quick to detect a camera, and the older and half-civilized ones always fiercely resent any at-

tempts which a snapshot artist may make to steal upon them unaware. On the other hand, many of the partly educated young squaws—the government wards taken from the Reservations, taught the three R's and introduced to hats and corsets by their well-meaning but misguided guardians—are eager to earn money by posing. Many pictures are publicly offered of Sally, wife of Indian Jim. She has been taken in a variety of poses. The most famous of these is called "The Indian Madonna," and supposed—by a long stretch of the imagination—to resemble Raphael's "Virgin and Child." But no halo surrounds the head of Sally, and Little Jim, an infant at the time, was so swathed in blankets that only his broad, brown face can be seen. All of the Klickitat squaws part their straight, black locks in Madonna fashion. A leading photographer at The Dalles considers this a remarkable coincidence, whereas it is the position in which the hair naturally falls of its own weight, at either side of the head. With a little effort, that part is more clearly defined. But, unlike that of the Madonna, the crown, back and sides of the aboriginal Klickitat woman's head is nearly always covered with a kerchief, brought forward and knotted under the chin. For this purpose only the brightest hues are popular. Equally vivid colors are demanded for the calico frocks, which the squaws make for themselves. Klickitat women, unlike their

civilized sisters, have not, as yet, succumbed to the black art of the sweat-shop manufacturers. Aside from their blankets and kerchiefs, all of their wearing apparel is home-made. There are clean and dirty people among the Indians, just as there are among all other races. Many of the squaws wash themselves and their clothes as frequently and as thoroughly as do the neatest of their Caucasian neighbors.

The year round, no matter how high the mercury may soar, the squaws muffle themselves in blankets. Only the quite young girls expose the throat or go with head uncovered. So soon as a maiden begins to develop womanly curves, her figure is so completely disguised by her blankets that one feels, without being told, how dreadfully shocked are the aborigines at sight of the clinging draperies of the white man's squaw. I had tried to secure Josie Skookem's picture as an illustration for a magazine article. With or without the desired illustration, the article must be finished and forwarded. The money to be paid for it is sorely needed to bolster a depleted bank account.

CHAPTER VIII

MARGERY TREVOR stopped with us for a month and, during the first week of her stay, we encountered Nan, the Balky. One afternoon, Percy Nelson, who had been engaged as our charioteer, drove up to the door a long-legged, hungry-looking mare with spacious bald spots distributed unevenly over a coat of dark sorrel. As this animal stood under our roof-tree, she appeared so languid, world-weary and weak, that I felt sure Margery Trevor would enjoy the afternoon's drive, since any horse showing indications of spirit greatly alarms her. To our amazement, Nan started off at a brisk gallop that shook the rickety hack and scattered clouds of dust upon us.

"Why do you make the poor creature go so fast this warm day, Percy?" asked Margery, endeavoring to conceal her fright under solicitude for the animal.

"I don't make her do anything. That's the way she always does," replied Percy. "It seems like she just can't walk. She either runs or stands still." To run or rest each alternate five minutes was Nan's programme for that afternoon. She was perspiring freely and breathing laboriously, and, although given

every encouragement to proceed at a leisurely pace, persisted in galloping between intervals of resting. Nevertheless, in the course of three hours we managed to travel about twelve miles. Our objective point was the oldest homestead hereabout. It had been taken up by a Portuguese hermit who, instead of posing or sulking after the manner of his kind, had busied himself with the clearing of his land and in planting large vineyards as well as orchards of apples, peaches and plums. Because of the recent death of the industrious hermit, the homestead had come into the market. Therefore, Seton Postley, who knows nothing whatever about vineyards, orchards and kindred agricultural enterprises, went to inspect the place in the interest of a fellow Princetonian, who thinks he yearns for the simple life of the wilderness, and has sufficient fortune to gratify any Tom-fool whim. If our young guest's class-mate buys the hermit's place he need never worry about wells. The Portuguese, more wise than I, followed the course of de Petrio Canyon until he came upon a well-watered tract of tillable land. This valuable ranch is temporarily occupied by the "Swede" Boyesen, so dubbed to distinguish them from several other neighbors of the same name. While Mrs. "Swede" Boyesen is built upon heroic lines, her size is a matter of bone rather than of flesh. When Percy presented us to her she was strolling about the grounds with

bare feet. To level any question in our minds, she tranquilly explained that she had removed her shoes because they hurt her and in quite as casual a manner as she might have said that she had removed her hat because the afternoon was warm. She seemed not to regard an absence of footgear as remarkable, and her perfect self-possession under the circumstances filled me with envy.

Mrs. "Swede" Boyesen's two younger daughters were equally informal of manner. When they came forward, their long, thick, dark brown locks were wet and hanging about their sturdy shoulders, because they "had just begun to wash their hair" when we drove into the yard. The sight of these two plump, dark-eyed, rosy-cheeked girls enlightened us as to the reason for Percy's enthusiasm about the deceased hermit's ranch, especially after he remarked that the Boyesen girls are accomplished dancers and always in demand as partners of Saturday evenings. These weekly functions are well attended, because here class distinctions are not strictly observed. The man-servant may not only aspire to lead the dance with his master's daughter, but he may escort her to and from the scene of the festivity. In a modest way, these daughters of the Boyesens are heiresses, as their parents, by dint of unceasing labor and economy, have accumulated considerable money. Despite this well-known prosperity, the two older boys of the

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family are employed as ordinary laborers at a saw-mill, where their elder sister officiates as cook for a weekly wage of four dollars, four "bits."

When the chatelaine of the deceased hermit's ranch had taken us through the orchards, vineyards and gardens, she led the way to the front veranda of the house, where were spread to dry a collection of bear and coyote pelts, stripped from animals trapped by herself in de Petrio Canyon during last winter. Having explained that these skins were thoroughly cured and for sale, she seemed greatly disappointed that we did not take advantage of the delicately expressed hint. Her disappointment was pardonable since we had been so indiscreet as to enthusiastically voice admiration of the furs, notably of one once worn by a young coyote. So soft, fine and silvery was that pelt that it might—in some circles—venture to masquerade as a silver fox.

The route selected by Percy for our return journey took us past the site of a burned saw-mill which had stood flush with the road. The spot is now apparently a meeting place for the cattle of the entire county. Never before had I seen so large an assemblage of unattended cows loafing on a highway. All were complacently chewing their cud and some of them were so deliberate about moving that Nan had to be halted in her temporarily rapid career while Seton alighted and drove them aside.

Otherwise they would likely have been run over, our chariot wrecked and ourselves sued for damages. Soon afterward we came upon a collection of dark red buildings belonging to the homestead of Mr. Montmorenci Jones, a retired Thespian who may have been a star in the theatrical firmament, as Percy asserts that he was, but who certainly does not shine as a road-builder, judging from the work done on the new public highway passing his property. It was not accepted by the county road commissioners because of the number of stones and oak roots which were covered with earth instead of being removed with axe, pick and shovel, aided by hard manual labor. But Mr. Jones has other interests than building roads and developing orchards. He deals largely in real estate and is an agent for homesteaders who, having proved up, wish to sell a portion or all of their property. It was through his efforts that Seldie disposed of her first "forty." According to Percy, Mr. Montmorenci Jones made so shrewd a bargain with the purchasers that he acquired title to ten of the acres in addition to the usual five per cent commission collected from Seldie, who only recently heard the full particulars of the deal. Whereupon she sought out her shrewd agent, expressed her opinion of him in unmeasured terms and took her business out of his hands. The others laughed at Percy's recital of this tale of

trickery, but my sympathy is entirely with Seldie. Two women who have lived together in a tent and then in a tiny shack for many, many months are certain to part bitter enemies or firm friends. Seldie and I are friends. And because neither one of us is popular with the women of this region, we must also be cranks.

From the rejected stretch of new road, Percy turned into a thick forest which is crossed by a wagon track so narrow and so rough that it is never used in winter and but rarely in summer. Half way through this stretch of woods a one-room shack stands close to the road. The little dwelling is fast falling into ruins, and weeds block the trail to its narrow door. It was once the home of a widow who became insane from living there alone for nearly five years. Finally it became necessary to transfer her to an asylum. There she soon afterward died, but not before the government had granted her title to the quarter section claim. During a lucid interval, she executed a will bequeathing equal shares of her estate to Mr. Montmorenci Jones and another neighbor who had been kind to her while she lived in Klickitat. This legend proves that the virtue of charity may be richly rewarded even in a wilderness, since the land bequeathed by the late homesteader is now worth fifty dollars an acre.

"Poor soul!" sighed sympathetic Margery Trevor.

"The loneliness here must have been terrible!"

"There wasn't no excuse for her going crazy from loneliness in this neighborhood where there's so many nice men," retorted Percy, who, doubtless, classes himself as one of the nice men instead of as an exceedingly attractive boy.

As a matter of fact, the deceased homesteader might have retained her wits as well as her widowed state had she built her shack close to the line of any one of four adjoining properties. The woman homesteading a property in this region has little to fear. The coyotes, as elsewhere, are cowards; the few deer are harmless; the cougar and bear retreat as civilization advances; the Indians are law-abiding and the white men, willing to carve a home from the wilderness, are nothing if not chivalrous. Infinitely preferable to the dauntless Seldie's manner of living alone for five years is the plan of four women who have settled upon as many adjoining quarter sections, built a common living room at the intersecting corners of the several properties, and opening from it four shacks, each ten by fourteen feet. Thus does each settler obey the law requiring her to sleep on her own land every night for five years. It frequently happens, however, that a homesteader is granted leave of absence in order that he or she may go elsewhere to earn enough money to maintain existence, and to make the required improvements upon the

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holding. In addition to having each other's society and a certain sense of protection, these four women homesteaders are minimizing the cost of living, of digging a well and of hauling supplies from Baldwin. With the square mile of range jointly belonging to them they are profitably running cattle, and, until recently, had the privilege of letting their cows roam over a portion of Caleb Loring's quarter section. This holding has, of late, been roughly fenced in, and upon its eastern line is posted a sign warning all persons from crossing the property under penalty of a trespass prosecution. The notice obviously is intended for our "Mike," as that route is the short-cut to his work on our upper well. The Italian laborer, casually christened "Mike" by an Irish railway foreman, laughed scornfully when the notice was translated to him and there and then swore a sacrilegious oath to trespass daily. There is no danger that the Italian will ever encounter Loring, who discreetly keeps out of his way. Although of amiable disposition, I fear that Mike may, some day, discipline Loring simply for the sake of relieving the deadly monotony of his life here. Just now none of his countrymen are employed near by and even had he a horse to carry him to the scenes of the regular Saturday night dances, he has not sufficient English to make himself intelligible to the young women whom he would meet at them. We express our ideas to

him in a weird mixture of Spanish, French and Latin, supplemented by signs, which he politely endeavors to comprehend. We privately believe that the signs are the most intelligible portion of our discourse.

Because of Mike's phenomenal strength, he is greatly admired by women, notably by Angelina, a dark-eyed, vivacious coquette living with her parents, who are of the prosperous Italian colony at The Dalles. Whenever he makes an appearance at this Columbia river metropolis, its tough citizens are careful to treat him with respect, as it is a matter of common knowledge that during one visit there, he cleared out a crowded saloon by literally throwing all of its patrons into the street. Mike's visits to The Dalles occur once a month and in the course of twenty-four hours of reckless merriment he rids himself of twenty-six days' earnings.

"At twenty-three years old, it's time for that Dago, Mike, to quit his foolin' and be gettin' somethin' ahead," severely remarks Mr. Barney, who, from biographical accounts furnished by himself, led a glad, bad life previous to the thirtieth anniversary of his birth. On that memorable day he encountered his Beatrix in the dining-room of a North Dakota hotel, where she officiated as waitress, and settled down as a Benedick.

Whenever disposed to pity myself because of having to cook three meals each day and to keep four

rooms swept and dusted—a surprising amount of dust blows into the shack through its wire-screened windows and doors—I think of Mrs. Barney. She has four children, under nine years of age, and in order that the two elder ones may attend school three miles distant by the shortest trails, she escorts them there five mornings of the week. At the same time she leads a three-year-old daughter with one hand and on the other arm carries the baby. She dare not leave the younger children alone at home. This trip is repeated at four o'clock, making a twelve-mile walk in addition to doing the cooking, washing and sewing for six persons. Incidentally, she attends to the poultry, pigs and cow, helps with the planting and does a part of our washing and baking. Because the Barneys' shallow water hole has recently given out, all of the laundering must now be accomplished at the little homestead occupied by the large gang of Italian laborers who cleared the land for my orchard. Richard promptly realized that the little holding would be a good investment, and purchased it with the idea of some time developing a portion of the land. We have named the place Fleitmanhurst in honor of its original homesteader and of the name of a journal that she ardently admires. The shack faces a fenced-in clearing, bare of trees, shrubs or verdure. At its rear, patches of grass struggle valiantly for existence, also several

clumps of bushes and a few trees which escaped the axe. This is truly amazing, as the pioneer usually cuts down everything within five hundred feet of the dwelling, which, in consequence, is wind-swept in winter and gets the hottest rays of the sun, as well as swarms of flies, throughout the summer.

Near the rear door of Fleitmanhurst, a deep well of clear, cool water is shaded by a cluster of willows. Close to these trees is a partially broken-down canvas cot whereon the Barneys' younger children nap while in the adjoining house their mother rubs, wrings and rinses garments during several days of each week. She interrupts herself only at noontime for long enough to cook dinner on a decrepit range in the shack's living-room, and again at four o'clock when the elder children must be escorted from school.

At sunset the Barneys return to their mile-distant home, our foreman wheeling a barrow loaded with rough-dried clothes and four water-filled kerosene cans, the mother carrying the baby and the other children following in Indian file. They walk through a wilderness carpeted with innumerable unfamiliar blooms that have somehow survived the drought now making the life of the settlers here extra trying.

Mrs. Barney works harder, and, consequently, gossips less than any other woman in this region. Since coming here three years ago she has been only once to a settlement. That was last week when she

went to a hospital at The Dalles with her little boy who had blown off one thumb while meddling with blasting powder. As the baby has not been weaned, she could not be left behind, and, by turns, the parents carried her over the rough road to Baldwin, a journey deemed hard by unencumbered pedestrians. For her hard work and indefinite separation from her kinsfolk, Mrs. Barney is rewarded with a rough shelter, coarse clothing and a monotonous diet. Potatoes and pork from Sunday to Saturday are varied by pork and potatoes from Saturday to Sunday. Only occasionally do the Barneys taste vegetables, berries or fresh fish.

On his way home from the letter boxes the other day, Seton left at Fleitmanhurst a salmon which the rural mail-carrier said had been sent by a Baldwin fisherman to the Barneys who had bespoken from him one fresh fish each week. That was the first time the professional fishmonger—a desperately poor and ragged-looking person—had remembered to fill the order to a perfectly responsible customer. The salmon weighed ten pounds and was devoured within the hour after reaching the frying pan at Fleitmanhurst. Not a shred of it remained when the Barneys, their offspring, Mike (their boarder), and a family of kittens had dined. Small wonder, since the repast chiefly consisted of fish, and all of the diners had been fasting since five o'clock that morning.

Luckily, the elder Nelson, who had gone with Seton to deliver the fish, did not accept Mrs. Barney's invitation to remain and share the feast. Percy's father never attends dances or any other type of local social function, but he rarely is missing from the group gathered at Letter Box Grove at mail time. As he invariably appears there clad in a worsted suit of ancient cut, a red silk necktie and a green felt hat, we suspect that this toilet is made especially for the occasion, because he is supposed to be on the look-out for a cook, laundress, housekeeper—in short, a wife. Naturally, he dare not run the risk of encountering an eligible woman when not looking his smartest. The maid we are trying to lure here from Portland shall never be allowed to meet the mail stage, although Richard insists that such a prohibition will not prevent the sod widower from meeting her and ultimately persuading her to accompany him to the nearest Justice of the Peace.

“But, Mr. Van Cortlandt, she may not take a shine to Nelson,” argued Mr. John Tanner, who was present when the subject was under discussion.

“Given no rivals and an opportunity to make love, any man can persuade any woman to marry him,” replied Richard out of the wisdom of experience in many lands and among red, white and black women.

We are fortunate in owning the water rights of a well even a half-mile distant, though at the time of

acquiring Fleitmanhurst it seemed to me that the innumerable little streams and pools on this place could not utterly dry up. Nevertheless, they have done so, and now we are trying to make sure of having water near at hand by getting one of the two wells deepened. The lower well is picturesquely if inconveniently located amid a clump of willows at the bottom of a canyon. It is reached by a trail, which, winding through the shrubbery, turns suddenly from right to left at intervals, until, abruptly descending, it passes a natural bathtub of heroic size which Richard has christened "Ford's Pool," in honor of a friend whom he greatly admires because no woman has "roped and bound" him with a wedding ring. This bowl-shaped excavation which all the spring was filled to its moss-edged brink with crystal clear water, would make an ideal bathing tank, as the birds well know.

The lower well is a fascinating objective point for a stroll, albeit a bit difficult to climb from even when empty-handed. It is a strong man's feat to carry water up that steep path and one that none of the laborers covet. The second or upper well is just outside the kitchen door. Mr. Barney, with Mike's assistance, is deepening this well, and comes several times daily to warn me that there will shortly be a blast. He seems to think that my nerves are so sensitive that the sound and vibration caused by ex-

ploding powder will reduce me to hysterics. On the contrary, I am nervous about Mr. Barney. The upper well-hole is now fifty feet deep, and, as he must needs be drawn up from its bottom after he has lighted the fuse for each blast, any delay on the part of the men above ground might result fatally. Richard, being my brother and, therefore, forced to tolerate my idiotic ideas, laughs at my forebodings and says confidently: "I can take care of Barney." His confidence does not reconcile me to the foreman's danger. Were the man to be blown to atoms, Richard might be able to put him together again, but not so that Mrs. Barney would be satisfied.

Barney is sure that this is considered one of the most promising orchards in this neighborhood because wherever he goes, he hears somebody "knocking" it on account of its lack of a spring well and a legal outlet into the county road. Loring is telling our neighbors, who repeat the remark to Seldie so that it may promptly come to us, that never shall we have a right-of-way across his property. Seton Postley says there is at least one way out of a *cul de sac*. Possibly he knows what he is talking about. That is a Postley characteristic.

CHAPTER IX

FROM the hour of her arrival here, Margery Trevor talked of her intention of walking down Mullen Hill on her return trip to Portland. She literally carried out that threat, although she departed in state, enthroned on the back seat of the Nelson hack.

As on the previous occasion, Nan started off at a gallop, but when half-way up the first hill, she stopped. No verbal urging on the part of Percy and Seton could induce her to proceed. Margery would not permit them to touch the mare with the whip. So we waited ten minutes until the animal voluntarily started and trotted rapidly into Letter Box Grove where she again halted, this time in the midst of a gathering of neighbors who greeted us with derisive shouts. There were several prolonged rests before we reached the top of Mullen Hill and the turning which discloses the long road, cut like a shelf against a bluff descending a sheer thousand feet into de Petrio Canyon and the Big Klickitat, a wild, turbulent stream, which has cut its way through solid rock to the Columbia. It is a road to terrify any woman not

reared among the mountains and one which most of the settlers' wives and daughters refuse to drive down, although the men living hereabout brazenly maintain that it is a first-class thoroughfare and never has been the scene of a bad accident. I do not believe them. They invariably eye one another significantly whenever the subject is broached in the presence of a woman, and a badly wrecked wagon, lying half-way down the bluff is gradually disintegrating. No wonder that Margery Trevor insisted upon alighting from the hack. Nor that I followed her example, the while conciliating the boys by promising that we would soon be glad to ride again, as the day was hot and breezeless. But Margery's determination to lose weight was as firmly grounded as her fear of Nan's balking, and mile after mile we trudged over the dusty road, the occupants of the hack regularly pausing to protest. Seton declared that Margery's shoes were not adapted for the rough going, nor her legs in training for the exercise, while Percy feared that we were overtaxing our strength. So frequently was Margery obliged to rest by the wayside that it was high noon when we reached a bridge spanning the Big Klickitat. Having crossed the river, Percy tied Nan's halter to the rail of a road culvert and led us down a steep, winding trail to a little pool of clear, cold water, shaded by low-growing willows and infested with mosquitoes. Seated

upon a convenient log in that sylvan retreat of doubtful comfort, we had murdered an army of insects, as well as almost devoured the contents of the luncheon basket when two middle-aged men, crossing the culvert, paused and leaned over its railing. "Here's a party of campers!" exclaimed the stouter of the two strangers.

"And water!" joyfully added the other, who was slender and wiry, and swart as an Indian. Vaguely I fancied that I had previously seen him, and taken a dislike to his appearance.

When the two strangers had descended to our al fresco dining-room, Percy politely dipped water for them with an empty tomato can. The swarthy man urged his companion to drink as much of it as he could hold, adding the warning: "Clancy, this will be your last chance of getting water till you reach Van Cortlandt's place, and there'll be blamed little of it up there, I'm hopin'."

Seton and Percy exchanged glances as Margery Trevor proffered the remaining sandwiches, which the men accepted with a show of reluctance and remarks to the effect that they had not come there to eat. The next moment, however, the stouter of the two men, spying some canned pineapple, exclaimed: "I ain't seen none of that fruit for years!" and eagerly accepted what was left of it. When he had eaten the Hawaiian fruit, he slowly got upon his feet

in response to his companion's reminder that they "would better be toddling along," as it was five miles to Van Cortlandt's.

Margery, Seton and Percy focused their gaze upon me, and I addressed the strangers: "We have just come from Mira-Monte orchard and can assure you that Mr. Van Cortlandt is not at home to-day." Richard had planned to go fishing directly after the mail carrier had passed through Letter Box Grove.

"Hell!" exclaimed the dark-eyed gentleman, and then introduced himself: "My name's Jack Gibbons and this here's"—indicating his companion—"Bill Clancy. He's a sort of a—a—pardner of mine, an' we was goin' to make the final arrangements about borin' a well on that ranch," adding hastily and glancing covertly at Mr. Clancy: "I see Van Cortlandt in Portland a spell or so ago, an' he agreed to have the work done at four dollars a foot."

Knowing positively that such an arrangement had not been made, our party remained silent, and, after a pause, Mr. Gibbons continues: "So long's Van Cortlandt ain't to home to-day, there ain't no use in us goin' no further." His keen glance took in the details of our several costumes. Only Margery Trevor wore the tailored suit and conventional hat of civilization; the rest of us were in the garments of the sweat shops. "You three is goin' back there to-night?"

Seton nodded.

"Then you can tell him what he's got to do for us."

While Margery and Seton exchanged glances and smiled covertly at this remark, I replied: "Such a message as that would not be satisfactory to Mr. Van Cortlandt," knowing right well that Gibbons' dictatorial manner would be certain to, sooner or later, arouse the mighty wrath of Richard. "But if you will write a letter definitely stating your lowest terms for boring the well and hand it to us this afternoon at Baldwin, the mail carrier shall deliver Mr. Van Cortlandt's reply to you to-morrow evening."

"You could just as well tell him what he's got to do for us," demurred Mr. Gibbons.

"The proposition must be submitted in writing." My tone was the decided one acquired by long dealing with office boys of procrastinating habits.

After a moment of hesitancy, the well-borer agreed to state his terms in writing. Mr. Clancy thanked us for our hospitality and awkwardly lifted his hat, the while Gibbons lounged slowly up the trail.

When we had followed Percy back to the road, he implored Margery and I to get into the hack. Out of pity for his evident distress at being seen driving into the village while we walked into it, we consented to resign ourselves to the ways of Nan, who instantly

shied and then balked because we had come upon a short stretch of road thickly coated with slag. Whereupon Margery and I, screaming lustily, flew as though equipped with wings, out of the hack, and, relieved of our weight, the mare gaily galloped along, leaving us to bruise our shoes upon the rough way. The next time that Nan halted, Percy again implored us, almost with tears in his brown eyes, to ride: "When I undertake to drive a pair of ladies to Baldwin, I want to drive them there," he said. "What will folks think of me?"

"They will think things of Nan," laughed Seton who was hugely enjoying the experience.

Percy's appeals having again melted Margery's tender heart, we clambered to our seats, and, by sheer force of will, remained in them for ten minutes, during which Nan balked, reared, plunged, and showed an inclination to back over the edge of the embankment into the Columbia. In the intervals of these alarming antics, we noticed a tent set up amongst some tall hemlocks growing on a half-acre flat close to the river's bank. Beneath the detached fly of the tent was an oven-equipped oil stove and on a bench opposite to it sat the two men whom we had recently encountered at the spring. They were enjoying a steaming repast served to them by a short and slender girl with large blue eyes, a small mouth, and a mass of brown hair threaded with gold, which

gleamed brilliantly as the sunbeams fell athwart her head. She was the bride I had seen the evening of my arrival at Baldwin three years before, and she was looking not a day older than at that time. Seton was first of our party to spy this Ganymede: "That's the prettiest girl I've ever seen!" he exclaimed. "I'll bet a quarter she's running an open-air restaurant in successful competition to those two fly-infested hotels."

"I'll bet you two bits she's married to one of those fellers she's waitin' on" hazarded Percy.

"Nonsense!" Seton's tone was supremely scornful. "Either one of those men might be her father."

"No tellin' what sort of a feller a girl will marry," retorted Percy from the wisdom acquired during sixteen years of knocking about the world at the heels of a widowed parent of wandering habits. "Now what do you think of that?" shaking his whip at the drooping Nan as the steamer's whistle emitted a series of shrill shrieks. "I made sure she'd try to back into the Columbia when she heard those whistles. An' she's goin' to sleep under their racket. She sure is some fright of a horse! Just like a woman—doin' the very thing you'd never expect of her."

The steamer's decks were crowded with summer tourists who audibly commented upon my khaki suit, high boots, and Mexican hat, while Seton presented the purser to Margery Trevor and commended her

to his care during the trip to Portland. While the boat was moving down-stream, Percy and Nan disappeared, but we found them waiting before the larger of the two general stores where the lad had gone to purchase a necktie with his fare's "four-bit" tip, and, incidentally, to collect the village news. The budget included the information that the pretty waitress at the camp near the Columbia was the wife of "Jack" Gibbons, the middle-aged well-borer, and that the pair customarily live in that manner. No doubt this primitive kind of existence is fascinating and healthful in summer, but it must have its drawbacks during cold or wet weather.

"That pretty, refined-looking girl does not have as comfortable a home as a half-civilized squaw!" exclaimed Seton indignantly. "It's a wonder she stands such treatment!"

"When a girl loves a feller she'll stand anything!" replied Percy whose knowledge of human nature far outstrips that of Seton Postley, his senior by three years. "Folks sez that those two—Gibbons and Clancy—ain't pardners at all. Gibbons is tryin' to sell out to Clancy. He got him to come to Klickitat by claiming to have two contracts for boring wells—one on your ranch and the other at Ed. Frost's—at the head of de Petrio Canyon. But Frost's got only a hundred dollars in cash."

"I fancy Frost won't have a well bored right

away," remarked Seton dryly. "Come on over to the barber's shop, Percy, and after we're through there, we'll be getting home."

Seton and Percy had, in turn, occupied the sole chair in the tiny barber shop, and, having paid for unsatisfactory hair-cuts, returned to the store which we chiefly patronize, given Nan more water than she deserved, and, having persuaded me to climb into the hack, we passed, by slow stages, the railway station, post-office, and powder house—the shack where combustibles are carefully sequestered—and, finally, gained the foot of Mullen Hill. Here Nan saw fit to halt. While we waited her pleasure an Indian astride of a gray cayuse stopped beside us.

"How do, Skokem!" said Percy cordially, adding in an aside: "He's Josie's husband. But he's had a few wives since she left him. I guess maybe he's got one now."

"How," responded the aborigine. A smile broadened his face as he critically surveyed the languid Nan. Then his dark eyes traveled with calm deliberation from the crown of my wide-brimmed hat to the toes of my rough boots, as he demanded: "Where you come from?"

"From Mira-Monte ranch."

"Mira-Monte," he repeated slowly. "Back there—I know," pointing toward the north. "How long you been up there?"

"Three years."

"Ugh!" Shrugging his shoulders and using the very direct mode of speech of the Indians and one which saves themselves and those with whom they converse an immense amount of time, "I never see you Baldwin."

Seton, whose gaze had been fastened upon Skookem's feet, suddenly spoke: "I want some mocassins exactly like yours. Can your wife make me a pair?"

"She no make um now," replied Skookem. "She no have um——" He stopped and frowned.

"Doeskin," suggested Seton.

The Indian nodded, and rode away. He was almost out of sight when Percy, who for some moments had apparently been pondering deeply, pointed with his whip toward the stationary Nan and said:

"Perhaps if a feller talked to her and petted her a bit, she'd go along better."

"It might be well for a fellow to try that experiment," I agreed. Accordingly Percy alighted from the wagon and, going to the mare's head, patted her gaunt neck. Next he put his lips close to her ear and told her of the oats which she would get so soon as they reached home. This promise seemed not to greatly impress Nan, who may have realized that the oats were five miles distant, and possibly had

doubts, based upon previous experiences, of the probability of Percy being able to make good his pledge. Nevertheless the lad had faith in this new scheme for inducing locomotion, for he patiently repeated it whenever the mare voluntarily halted. On each of these occasions I promptly alighted from the wagon because of a conviction that a balking horse is liable to suddenly become a backing horse, and having no fancy for being plunged into eternity via a sheer cliff descending to a turbulent river. This lack of confidence in Nan or in his ability to control her must have been very annoying to Percy for he seemed quite as glad to say good-bye to me when we finally reached Mira-Monte as he was to get a cheque for the day's time of himself and his outfit.

That evening was devoted to a discussion as to whether it would be wiser to make a contract with the owner of the boring outfit then encamped at Baldwin, to continue the work on the upper well, or to look further afield for a well-borer of more pleasing personality. The point in favor of Gibbons was that he could begin the work at once, whereas weeks might elapse before another boring outfit could be obtained. Moreover, the blasting had of late been wholly discontinued because Mike had not returned from his last spree at The Dalles, and no other labor was to be had. Nevertheless the prospect of having to depend permanently upon the lower well was too

discouraging to be entertained, particularly as that source of supply might cease at any time. Yet it is amazing with how small an amount of water one can learn to manage when that fluid is not to be procured for affection or money. Whenever possible, each quart is made to serve two purposes by Seton, who seems to regard the economy as a novel sort of diversion. The quart used for washing the tea cups he afterward carefully pours upon the thirsty rose trees near the tea house or sprinkles over the sweet peas which form a lavender and white exterior blind for his chamber window.

After carefully weighing the pros and cons of the matter, we concluded to offer Gibbons three dollars per foot, for boring, but to guarantee him one hundred dollars, even though water were almost immediately struck, since he must bear the expense of transporting the machine from Baldwin, and setting it up.

"If Mr. and Mrs. Gibbons and their assistant camp on this place, they'll expect to take water from that lower well, and there's hardly two feet in it now," observed Seton.

"They would better pitch their tent at Fleitmanhurst," I suggested.

"They would better live in the vacant shack at Fleitmanhurst," amended the always practical Richard.

"Suppose they've planned to stay here," hazarded Seton.

"They will have to change their plan," replied Richard. "Gibbons brought his well-boring outfit to this region expecting to get a contract to work here, and, even though he throws a bluff at first, he'll come to our terms." He sealed the letter with the air of one who has definitely settled a vexing question.

"Mrs. Gibbons is a pretty girl," observed Seton thoughtfully as he lighted the bedroom candles. "I wonder how that crusty, ill-mannered blacksmith induced her to marry him?"

"Probably she had never met a more superior type of man," replied Richard, "and thought that she was drawing a matrimonial prize. A very young woman judges men solely by comparisons."

In accordance with our promise made to him at the spring near Mullen Hill road, Mr. Jack Gibbons, professional well-borer, the following evening received our letter stating the terms upon which we would employ him. Soon after noon of the third day thereafter he appeared at Mira-Monte, and, after some demur and remarks to the effect that if "he didn't look out for himself nobody else wasn't goin' to do it for him," he agreed to accept our written proposition. But no sooner was the contract signed than it was very nearly broken, and by the mutual consent of both parties to it.

"There'll be a nice shady place for my two tents," observed Mr. Gibbons, indicating a clump of trees which form an oasis in the centre of the kitchen garden, a plot of ground planted in the spring with all manner of vegetables scarcely half of which have come up because of the drought.

"It's too close to the shack," objected Seton in mild and courteous tones.

"I'll camp right here—close to my machine, young feller," retorted the well-borer sharply.

"You're not going to camp anywhere on this ranch," remarked Richard quietly. "There's scarcely any water here, as you know, and at Fleitmanhurst, only a half-mile away, there is a good well close to a vacant shack. Mrs. Barney goes there several times a week to do her washing, but she won't interfere with you."

"There'll be only me an' my wife an' one man," persisted the well-borer, "an' we'll only be sleepin' in them tents. It's customary," he added, with an air of finality, "for us to board with the family we're borin' for."

"Nobody boards at this house," replied Richard curtly. He and Seton walked away in one direction, Mr. Jack Gibbons departed in another direction, and we had not the slightest idea of when he might be expected to return—if ever. But a few days later the boring outfit arrived. Its various sections had

been loaded upon flat drays and hauled from Baldwin over a short-cut but very rough trail, made years ago by the Klickitats and constantly used by them until our fences barred their way. The village man whose four horses drew the heaviest portion of the machinery was greatly interested in the enterprise. "Of course you've had that hole witched," he remarked, and looked dubious when told that no water witches had been consulted. The cult enjoy high favor in this region. Nobody will admit a belief in that form of black art but all maintain that not to seek the guidance of a witch stick before digging a well is the acme of folly. My remark that "water is where it is found and not to be pointed out by a hazel stick in the hand of a charlatan," is hereabout quoted as the babbling of a tenderfoot and worthy only of derision.

When the boring machine was first set up its grinding noise and the vibrations which it caused were rather distracting, but after a few days we scarcely noticed either. The chief annoyance is that the well-borer and his assistant, young Frost, who is "working out" a part of the well-boring done on his property, are constantly borrowing articles from the shack or the storehouse and forgetting to return them. In addition to this crime, Gibbons promptly appropriated my favorite snake stick, because he "liked it." Since then I have carefully

carried all walking sticks indoors instead of laying them conveniently to hand across a huge stump near the bar-gate through which the two machinists enter the place.

Since the beginning of July everyone hereabout has carried a snake stick when taking their walks abroad. At this season the rattlers, being temporarily blind, do not rattle, and are literally under the feet and ready to bite before the intended victim is aware of their proximity. Thus far none of us has encountered a living rattler, although every neighbor is able to relate a thrilling tale about a snake and a friend's friend. Seton is filled with an ambition to either kill a rattler or to procure a dead one so that he may drape its skin on the walls of his "snake" room at Princeton College. He assures us that this apartment is the envy of his classmates because of its unique decorative scheme, and that all it lacks of perfection is a rattler's pelt. With this end in view he has posted a notice at Letter Box Grove offering a liberal reward for a local specimen of the coveted reptile. He rarely fails to meet the rural mail carrier, who passes through Letter Box Grove every week day of late, thanks to a government that can appreciate the wisdom of keeping the people of the wilderness in constant touch with civilization. Seton was starting for the grove on the fourth morning after the arrival of the boring

outfit when the owner of the machine halted him and asked—rather commanded him—to tell Mrs. Gibbons, due to arrive on the mail stage that day, how to reach Fleitmanhurst. Seton, ignoring Gibbons' brusque manner, promised to escort the young woman to the shack. He reached home that day barely in time to lay the cloth for luncheon. While performing that self-imposed task, he explained that he had helped Mrs. Gibbons to set her temporary home in order, adding, "She's a nice little thing. Far too refined to be married to that blacksmith."

Richard grinned: "The blacksmith's sorry for you, Seton. Only a few moments ago he remarked that 'that there young whipper-snapper, Postley'd never be good for nothin' better'n teachin' or clerkin', because he ain't got the muscle for real work.' You've no chance of ever getting a job from him."

"Just the same, I could put either one of those machinists on his back in a wrestling match," was Seton's serene reply as he stroked Pussy Mother, who was complacently perched upon his shoulder.

That afternoon the well-borer's wife came to Mira-Monte, and since then has repeated the visit nearly every day. Richard says that she looks like a Dresden china figurine masquerading in a calico frock, gingham sunbonnet and coarse shoes—so delicately regular are her features, so flawless her gardenia-toned complexion, so fine her gold-brown hair. Her

appearance and manner contrast oddly with the sinewy bulk and the rough ways of her saturnine husband whose patient submission to her childish, half-petulant tyranny is surprising, since to the rest of the world he is brusque and overbearing. Every-line, as Gibbons calls his young wife, prattles unrestrainedly about her affairs and long since confided to Richard that her romance with the well-borer, began on her step-father's farm where the machinist economized time by simultaneously boring a hole in basaltic rock, and planting affection for himself in the heart of the daughter of the house.

Seton Postley, unable to understand how a middle-aged ruffian like Gibbons could have the slightest attraction for the lovely Evelyn, does not agree with Richard's theory that a girl who has always led an isolated life, is likely to accept her first offer of marriage, in the fear that she may never have another one.

Since the boring machine has been set up we have had more callers than in the whole course of my residence here. Among the first of these visitors was Mr. Carpenter, the settler who donated Pussy Mother when she was a kitten. While renewing acquaintance with her he casually mentioned that his children had no pet animal. Whereupon, Seton eagerly presented to him a pair of kittens. Next day when Mrs. Gibbons complained that the Fleitman-

hurst shack was overrun with mice, with ill-concealed glee, Seton gave her Carrie, the laziest and hungriest of Pussy Mother's offspring.

"You all has been *feeding* that cat," remarked Mr. Gibbons in tones expressive of unmeasured scorn for our weakness of character, "but you can jest bet she won't get nothin' to eat in *our* shack less'n she catches it. "Tain't right for no cat with good claws onto her to be livin' off'n folks."

The well-borer's logic is sound. His is the doctrine of a much more sophisticated class.

Nevertheless, I am sorry that we let Carrie go, for Lila, the remaining kitten, is now an orphan. One night only a small portion of the food placed for the cats was consumed. Next morning only the kitten responded to Seton's call to breakfast. At noon and at evening Lila ate alone. When another morning dawned and Pussy Mother was still absent, Seton declared that some evil fate had overtaken her in the forest, and for hours vainly searched both "eighties" for traces of her. We concluded that she had fallen prey to a coyote, but changed that opinion later when the well-borer remarked quite casually: "Cats is coyotes' favorite meat." He exchanged glances with young Frost, who grinned broadly and winked an eye.

"Either Gibbons or Frost has shot Pussy by mistake for one of those gray rabbits which they hunt

for in the woods mornings and evenings," declared Seton. "And this isn't the open season for game," he concluded virtuously; also inconsistently since every few days we eat a partridge of his providing.

"Who is going to report them?" demanded Richard. "Like the Indians, these frontiersmen consider that they have a right to procure meat by any means in their power. But let's not discuss Pussy's fate in their hearing, as they are doubtless secretly laughing at our solicitude concerning her."

For several days thereafter Lila was greatly puzzled by the almost simultaneous disappearance of her kin. She wandered forlornly about the clearing, now and again trying to attach herself to Collie, who invariably scorned her overtures despite the affection which he had ever displayed toward her late mother. Next she attempted to win caresses from us and by persisting in her determination to be loved, is now permitted to remain upon our knees when we sit outside the shack in the cool of the evening. Although Seton and Richard brand her a nuisance and a shirk, too lazy to work for a living, I know that they are beginning to like her and am confidently looking forward to the time when they will loudly chant her praises.

CHAPTER X

"Now that you've made friends with Josie Skookem, you'll probably get into the *crème de la crème* of red society even though you haven't been able to break into the white society of Klickitat county," jeered Richard, who agrees with Seldie that I have been snubbed hereabout because only one of the neighboring women has called upon me during the three years and more of my residence here.

Mr. Tanner, who was present at the time, laughed heartily: "Anyhow, you don't feel badly about being snubbed, an' Gibbonses' wife is layin' awake nights wonderin' what she's done to offend the women 'round here. That little creature gets the icy face wherever she shows her pretty one. An' she's never did anybody a mite of harm."

Seldie smiled sardonically: "They're thinkin' that maybe—if she gets the chance—she'll do harm some time, for it ain't reasonable to suppose she's in love with that scowling well-borer."

"At that, she might be, Seldie," contradicted the old pioneer. "There's never no accountin' for what a woman'll do. But ever since the Gibbonses stayed

so long as the Blacke-McCormicks', a-borin' that wonderful well on that place, Mis' McCormick's been down on little Mis' Gibbons. So, of course, most of the other women are."

Mrs. Blacke-McCormick, acknowledged leader of society in this county, is an ex-schoolteacher of Chicago, and a member of the Illinois D. A. R. She owes her present exalted position to her husband's reputation for having ten thousand dollars "ready money." In addition to being in the chicken and butter business, she is chatelaine of a miniature imitation, in unpealed logs, of a colonial mansion. This unique house is surrounded by a log stockade of the sort in use when it was fashionable for Indians to arrange surprise parties for the diversion of the early settlers of America. Although my presence in this neighborhood has never been formally recognized by its social leader, I, nevertheless, have had the temerity—a New York society reporter will dare anything—to present myself unbidden at her gates. Received with the chilly politeness so familiar to the journalist and expected to utterly crush her, I instantly felt at ease with Mrs. Blacke-McCormick. Her distinctly middle-class appearance, coupled with her condescending air, so enraptured me that I settled myself comfortably in a rocking chair, preparatory to drawing her out. We were getting on nicely when the D. A. R.'s husband entered the room and

unconsciously upset this amiable scheme. It was Sunday morning. Mr. Blacke-McCormick had just had the bath he takes once a week whether he needs it or not, and was arrayed in a clean khaki suit, a pongee shirt and soft leather slippers, all of a shade precisely matching his yellow-brown hair, military mustache and sharply inwardly curved eyebrows. He followed my introduction to him—the chatelaine of the log mansion knows what is what—with a monologue about the vast sums of money he was spending upon his ranch and of how impossible it was for a person not possessed of exceptional intelligence to develop an apple orchard. When he paused for breath, I ventured:

“Some hundreds of persons of ordinary intelligence and limited resources have developed apple orchards that are now bringing in annual incomes of from five to ten thousand dollars——”

“*They* say they’re making that much money,” interrupted the host, “but don’t you believe them. Anyhow, you’ll never be able to do so because, being as you’ve always lived in New York, you can’t know anything about growing fruit.”

“But I can learn—I am learning. And my brother is——”

“That brother of you’n ain’t nothin’ but a minin’ engineer. He can’t help you none.”

This was a bit hard on Richard, who has had gardens in various lands. Before I could take up arms in his defense, however, my host continued:

"Besides, you ain't got a good well. Nor you ain't likely to get one. And a place without water's no good. Pity you haven't the money to take up some land nearer to this ranch, so as to have some show of gettin' a well like ours."

"Yes," echoed Mrs. Blacke-McCormick, "a well like ours. It cost eighteen hundred dollars. That is a great deal of money," she concluded impressively.

Eighteen hundred dollars seems like a great deal of money to me now, and I fancy it is about twelve hundred more than the McCormick well cost. The pause threatened to be an awkward one since I could think of nothing to say. Fortunately, at that moment came a violent scratching at the screen door. Collie was the culprit. He had been left outside the stockade lest he chase the Blacke-McCormick fowl, but in some way he had effected an entrance.

"I can't abide dogs," remarked the hostess graciously, as she reluctantly admitted Collie. He was in no way abashed by his cold reception, but, coming to a standstill in the center of the room, gazed with frank, uncritical brown eyes into her stern face. To get away from the topic of wells, water and worthless ranches, I made Collie go through with all of his

clever tricks, but the applause was half-hearted and as soon as opportunity offered I broached my errand.

With a show of reluctance, Mrs. Blacke-McCormick consented to part with two pounds of butter at a price considerably in advance of the quoted city market prices, and they were placed in the grass bag which Collie gallantly insisted upon carrying. When taking leave, I invited her to come and see us, but she replied that she never went so far from home. As she frequently walks the eight miles between her colonial copy in logs and Baldwin, I have an impression that she does not care to see more of me. I am uncertain whether this disapproval is aroused by my manner, my appearance, or my canine companion. It is difficult to understand how any human being can dislike Collie. I cannot help wearing my face since it is the only one that I have, and certainly the county's social leader should not have been offended by my manner toward herself as—ostensibly—it was one of meekness mixed with admiring awe—the kind I had for years successfully used with the most majestic of Manhattan's multi-millionaire matrons. It may be that I should have been more surprised to hear about the marvelous well. But its reputation was well known to me, having been furnished by Mr. Barney, whose sociable and curious disposition has

developed in him a fad for paying visits. As an inveterate Sunday caller, he has seen the inside of every shack within a ten-mile radius of his home. I suspect he paid his respects to the Blacke-McCormick's solely for the purpose of learning whether their place were blessed with what he terms a "regular well."

On my way home from the colonial log house, I met a band of fifteen hundred sheep. The animals belonged to Mr. Tanner and were innocently journeying to a slaughter-house from the up-country range whereon they had been fattening under the charge of a herder. This man begged me to stop until the band had passed by, because while sheep do not take alarm at the sight of an unfamiliar person who stands stock still, a moving body inspires the silly creatures with fear. Panic-stricken, they will turn and flee aimlessly in an opposite direction, the sheep at the edge of the band crowding against those in the center of it. The animals belonging to Mr. Tanner backed diagonally from my awful presence and toward a horseman who had been loitering at the rear of the procession. This man, riding close to my side, alighted from his horse and began to cultivate the acquaintance of Collie who, as usual, met him more than half way. This second herder explained that he was in no haste to reach Baldwin, but that the leading man insisted upon hurrying the

sheep along at an almost inhuman and certainly at a weight-reducing rate, because "he ain't had nothin' ter drink for three months."

Mr. Tanner has a characteristic method of keeping a herder with his sheep. Whenever such an employee comes to the village he gives him whatever wages are due him, and something extra. When the last dollar of this sum has been spent in the saloons or lost at the gaming tables, a tent and a grub stake on a sheep range present an alluring picture to the herder. Thus life continues from season to season and from year to year. Few herders accumulate any money, and, as a class, they either lack the initiative to get on in the world or, having made a series of business failures, give up trying to improve their condition.

Lila, orphaned and sisterless, is so lonely—or so naturally sociable—that she insists upon taking a daily walk with me despite the sticks, stones and earth-clods cast at her, and which she invariably dodges. We parade the neighborhood, Collie leading and Lila warily bringing up the rear. My walks have a definite purpose, the inspection of some other settler's orchard, in the hope of learning something of value about the care of my own. Rarely, indeed, do I find material for criticism. It would seem that a fruit which would refuse to thrive hereabout must be

most ungrateful, for everything possible is done to assist its budding, blossoming and fruition.

Every eastern farmer or horticulturist who visits the fruit-growing districts of the Klickitat country, expresses surprise at the amount of care bestowed upon an average-sized, progressive orchard. Not a blade of grass nor a weed is to be seen. The top soil is carefully mulched to a depth of two inches to preserve the moisture. Every tree is carefully pruned and sprayed. The fruit is thinned out so that one apple cannot touch another. The visitor's first question is: "Does it pay to give so much attention to so small an orchard—from five to ten acres?" It does pay. One man of Hood River, Oregon, took two thousand and forty-two dollars gross from one and three-fourths acres, which netted him nine hundred dollars per acre. Another grower took four thousand, two hundred and fifty-eight dollars from two and nine-tenths acres, and a third realized seven hundred and fifty dollars per acre, while still another sold five thousand boxes of apples, which netted him eight thousand dollars, from fifteen acres. But this class of orchardist does not sit on the fence and count the crows that chance to go by. He is continually occupied in examining each tree for signs of insects; in cutting a limb to make the tree more shapely; in pinching another limb to promote buds. He forces a

bountiful Nature to outdo herself by literally making two perfect apples grow where there might have been none at all.

It is asked if correct composition of soil, perfect climate and proper attention to details ensure perfect fruit and guarantee good profits? By no means! The individual grower might, and probably would, make a large income if he or she happened to be possessed of good business ability. But it is organization that has done so much for the famous fruit-growing districts of the Pacific Northwest. The individual grower cares for his apple orchard up to the time of picking. Then he stands aside and the Association takes the crop in hand and does the picking, packing, storing, selling and shipping.

During one of our rambles—it was a fortnight or so after my call at the colonial log house—Collie and I came upon a cabin standing solitary upon a grass-grown, unfenced half-acre clearing. Unlike the average abandoned dwelling hereabout, the shack's doors and windows were closely boarded over, and no glimpse could be obtained of its interior. Its exterior is charming. Wild roses had been trained to clamber about the walls and the field stone chimney, and there is a rustic porch before the door. Moreover, the clearing is innocent of the accumulated junk which nearly always disfigures the dooryards of most settlers who have gone away to earn money

with which to live while developing their holdings. On the opposite side of the road, and shaded by tall oaks, is a trough fashioned from the huge trunk of a fallen tree. But no water flows through it now, doubtless to the disappointment of many a thirsty, weary horse. As I sat on the edge of the trough and rested, a girlish figure came into view from around a curve in the road, and Collie, instantly recognizing the well-borer's young wife, ran to greet her. As though wearied by a long walk and the burden of her large basket, Mrs. Gibbons sank upon the soft, short turf, and, after breathing a sigh of relief, said:

"That Mrs. Blacke-McCormick in the fancy log house has terrible eyes. She bored right into me with them like she was trying to see whether I really went there to buy her eggs or to see the inside of her home. Anyone would think she was selling diamonds instead of 'cackle berries,' she's that stuck up. She wanted to know how much money Mr. Postley's got." I laughed and my companion, echoing the laugh, added: "She acted as though she didn't believe me when I told her that he's poor. She might know that by his clothes. She said it was told her that he intended to buy Loring's ranch, just so as to give you a right-of-way to the county road. When I said that I didn't believe that Mr. Postley has any money, she laughed in a sort of hateful way, and said: 'He spent money like a young prince yesterday at Baldwin. A

Jew peddler sold him two solid silver belts.' I s'pose she means that one you're wearing now—and another one. She asked how long you're expecting him to stay here."

"And you said?"

"That I didn't know, but hoped it would be for a long time—or, anyhow, until you get water—because I like Mr. Postley awfully," was the naïve reply. "He's different, somehow, from other boys—men," she added dreamily.

"Did you meet Miss Blacke-McCormick?" I asked.

"Anita? Yes. She stared at these old clothes I'm wearing till I felt like taking them off and throwing them out of the window, I was so ashamed of them, but she didn't speak excepting to ask why Mr. Postley's never at the Saturday night dances. Why doesn't he go to them?"

"Why don't you go to them?" I parried.

"Jack won't take me. He says he'd knock the block off'n any feller who'd dare to ask me to waltz. I haven't been to a dance since we were married."

Although she would probably enjoy going to the weekly dances, there was not a suggestion of discontent in the young wife's tones nor a shadow of unhappiness in the expression of her pretty face, as she gave her reasons for not attending the local festivities. Across Collie's red-gold head she smiled frankly into my eyes and changed the theme of her conversa-

tion only because the sight of the rose-covered cabin opposite recalled another topic to her mind: "The man that owns that shack went away from here because his wife ran off with their hired man—a Swede. I'd hate to be a Swede."

"Why?"

"Oh, they're all over this country—everywhere—and I just don't like them. They can't speak English without mussing it all up."

"We can't speak Swedish *at all*, Mrs. Gibbons."

"But if the Swedes are going to live among us they ought to learn to speak our way," persisted the well-borer's wife.

"Our way," I echoed, half aloud. "The old rule about doing in Rome as do the Romans cannot well be applied by the people who come to this part of the United States because the Klickitats' ideas and the Blacke-McCormick's ideas and Seldie's ideas are so utterly different."

"Well, I'm not going to take pattern after Mrs. Blacke-McCormick even if she does live in a fancy house and keep a hired girl," declared the well-borer's wife in positive tones. "Jack hates swells; he says they're never any good—'specially the men." She looked intently into my face as she put her next question. "Mr. Postley isn't really a swell—is he?"

"He does not say that he is one."

"That's just what I told Jack," said my com-

panion enthusiastically. "Mr. Postley's good, too. He'd never try to do harm to anyone. Look how worried he was about that cat that Ed Frost——" She stopped abruptly, stood up, and lifted her basket of eggs. "Let's go home," she suggested.

As the well-borer's young wife trotted along the trail ahead of me, I wondered what she would be like after a few more years of companionship with her jealous, sullen, uncouth husband. "Perhaps he really is a 'breed,' as Seldie surmises," I thought, "and untrustworthy." Suddenly the forest lost its charm for me. It seemed dark and menacing now that we were sheltered from the sunlight. The air felt chill. I was eager to get home—and see if Seton were safe. "Perhaps they've struck water this afternoon," I said in explanation of my quickened pace.

"That's right," agreed the well-borer's wife. "It comes all of a sudden, usually just after I've got acquainted with the folks at the place and like being round with them. And then," regretfully, "we have to move on and never see those people again. Jack don't mind so long as he gets his money. Generally speaking, he's glad to clear out; he says there's such a thing as getting to know some folks too well."



NO SCRUB OAK BREEDING PLACES FOR APPLE-TREE-DESTROYING INSECTS ARE IN
THIS ORCHARD

CHAPTER XI

THE boring machine continues to groan complainingly, and to shake the shack as it labors over the three-dollar-a-foot hole that seems likely to extend to China. Seton, having small faith in the venture, considers that the dollars are being thrown away. Richard believes that water may be struck at any moment, and, as he is advancing the money to pay for the work, it is fortunate that he has so sustaining a conviction. I am hoping for luck. Without water from a reliable source the ranch would still be valuable, as the soil of this region is so rich that fruit trees grow and flourish without irrigation. So eagerly are lands hereabout being purchased at this time that my quarter-section has doubled in value since I bought it nearly three and a half years ago. Anyhow, in case Gibbons does not strike water after boring several hundred feet, it would be possible to store sufficient rainwater in a huge reservoir of cement-lined wood, to tide us over from one wet season to another. There is no reason for being discouraged. In fact, I am feeling very optimistic since the recent visit of an orchard expert who said, after examining

my trees: "In two years more you should get a fair-sized apple crop."

The amount of water that now suffices for a bath is astonishingly small, and there is not a drop of it to spare for the windows and the floors. These can merely be kept broom clean and are beginning to look decidedly grimy. So must they continue to appear until Nature or Gibbons provides us with more water, and, although we very much desire a well, we are desperately tired of having the boring outfit on the premises. It attracts curious neighbors, most of whom voice pessimistic opinions as to the result of the enterprise and solely because no witch stick was consulted.

"You'll have to bore a mile for water," blatantly prophesied Mr. Blacke-McCormick.

"To bore a mile would cost only fifteen thousand dollars," observed Seton, forgetting the rôle that goes with his sweat-shop garb.

Mrs. Gibbons, who is kind-hearted and generous to a degree, has, several times, implored her husband to give Seton a job as helper with the boring machine. The unworldly little creature would be greatly surprised to learn that from the Princeton junior's income he could buy the entire boring outfit and scarcely miss its purchase money.

Because of the smuts with which their faces and hands are habitually smeared, the well-borer and his

assistant look like thugs whereas Ed Frost is a respectable young orchardist, and Gibbons himself is harmless—so far as we know—aside from his habit of kicking Collie. We have hoped that the dog would retaliate with his strong, white teeth, but, instead of reprisals, each morning he cordially welcomes both mechanics and escorts them from the bar-gate to the scene of their labors. Collie's behavior is an example in amiability, forgiveness and loving kindness to those who have spitefully treated him, by which most of the persons whom he has encountered might profit. He has such charming manners that in his next incarnation he will doubtless be a man of fashion of the type greatly sought after by hostesses. Seton prophesies that the animal will be a cotillion leader when that form of dancing again becomes the mode because of the grace with which he waltzes on his hind legs whenever invited to go for a walk.

"He's so tickled to get to go," explained Gibbons one afternoon as Collie, Seton and I were starting for a ramble.

"Evey-line," who had returned to the ranch that day with the two mechanics after the noon-day meal at Fleitmanhurst, remarked that she had come over because she was so lonely at home, so we invited her to walk with us. Since then it has been her daily habit to accompany us.

Aside from Mrs. Gibbons, the only neighboring

woman who has called here is Mrs. Carpenter. She and her husband came on the day that Nan, Percy, Seton and I escorted Margery Trevor to Baldwin, and, as they happened to arrive just as Richard was starting to go fishing, I hate to wonder how cordial was his greeting. He confessed that he neglected to make tea for them, though the lady had gone into raptures over the silver that Seton had left on the sideboard. The Carpenters, comparatively near neighbors, live two miles distant by the most direct trails. By that route they came hither, the woman mounted upon their horse, which her husband led over the steep and rocky path where a mis-step might result in a serious accident to both steed and rider. During their call, Richard showed them over the shack and was greatly amused by their opinions and criticisms of it. They instantly appreciated the advantage of using gunny sacking dust covers for the beds, improvised dressing-tables and wardrobes, and waxed enthusiastic over the Oriental window draperies and the brass sconces in the library and the living-room. But they considered our heirloom mahogany furniture "too black and funeral looking," and the rugs "too solemn colored."

For many weeks following the Carpenters' call, I had tried hard to return it, but deemed it discourteous to go there alone. Richard, scorner of women, flatly refused to do his social duty and Seton—not

scenting any amusement—only consented, finally, to accompany me on condition that he need not make a special toilet. Although the afternoon on which I wrung this reluctant consent from him was excessively warm, I feared to put off the excursion lest he change his mind, and directly after luncheon we fared forth. A pair of black thread gloves was expected to lend a touch of elegance to my faded, oft-laundered blue cotton frock, and to his khaki shirt and trouser costume, Seton added a necktie. Near the bar-gate we encountered Evelyn, looking exceptionally pretty in a pink checked gingham frock and sun-bonnet, and invited her to go with us.

Despite explicit directions and the loan of a compass from Richard, who had once been to the Carpenters' on business, we three—two tenderfeet and a girl reared on the frontier—contrived to get away from the direct trails and to wander several miles in the wrong direction because of mistaking a red house on a hilltop for our destination, which was a red house on an entirely different hilltop.

Hours later when we had about decided to abandon our attempt to call upon the Carpenters, we came upon an unoccupied shack standing in a neglected orchard, and, spying a well sweep, scaled a barbed-wire fence in the hope of securing a drink of water. The sweep topped a perfectly dry water-hole, but from the steps of the house Evelyn Gibbons

discerned a red homestead which she concluded must be the one we were searching for, because an ancient sorrel horse was grazing near to it. We had previously seen that animal at Letter Box Grove, and knew it as the cherished possession of the family whose home we were seeking. Although painfully thin, indecently bald and, apparently, born a century ago, the sorrel is certainly worth the ten dollars paid for him by the Carpenters, for he frequently hauls several hundred pounds of freight from Baldwin. It may be that his green old age is due to the excellent care which he takes of himself. He never travels faster than a walk nor neglects an opportunity to take a nap. He usually goes to sleep the instant that his rider alights from his ribs.

Our arrival at the Carpenters' house abruptly aroused its mistress from a siesta which she was enjoying upon the living-room lounge. But she was in no way embarrassed when, upon opening her eyes, she beheld three strangers standing at her wide-open door. Swinging a pair of generously developed feet from the couch, she received us beamingly, scarcely heeding and certainly not catching the names of my two companions as they were introduced. As she vivaciously chatted in juvenile accents—due to an impediment of speech—we took in her handsome Junoesque proportions, brilliant black eyes, luxuriant hair, and clear, healthy-looking complexion.

This stunning beauty, in no wise disconcerted by a consciousness of her dishabille, talked easily as she pinned together the gaping fronts of her negligee, and knotted up her loosened locks. Then, with gentle force, she removed Evelyn's pink sunbonnet and my sombrero from our respective heads. This hospitable rite accomplished, she introduced her neat, well-mannered children; two curly-haired blonde little girls, and a twelve-year-old boy with sad, wistful eyes set in an abnormally developed head.

Mrs. Carpenter, who is exceedingly fond of what she terms "mingling in society," sees very little of it at present, because, during the summer, all of her neighbors are busy. She explained that she had called to invite me to join the weekly sewing circle, which includes most of the women within a ten-mile radius, but that since the beginning of warm weather these meetings had been adjourned. Nevertheless, the past few weeks had not been wholly devoid of diversions. There had been several picnics for which everyone had dressed up "so that we shall not forget how," she interpolated, and one woman had given a "pink" luncheon. As our hostess began to describe this function, she begged me not to laugh. Indeed, I had had no idea of laughing, and don't know why it is that people so frequently surmise that I am amused at them. Can it be that what I consider is a smile indicative of amiable interest in their dis-

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course, is, by them, construed as an effort to restrain unseemly mirth? It is a mortifying misfortune not to be able to force one's facial muscles to faithfully portray one's emotions. Having tried to convey this idea to Mrs. Carpenter, she lucidly explained: "That's because of the shape of your mouth," whereupon Seton solemnly nodded agreement with her, and Evelyn Gibbons looked absolutely bewildered, as well she might have.

When Mr. Carpenter entered the room, his wife introduced Mrs. Gibbons as the wife of Seton Postley. After I had explained that the one was married to the well-borer and the other was too young to think of acquiring a helpmeet, she remarked that any stranger would assume them to be bride and bridegroom. Seton promptly covered Evelyn's embarrassment by asking for a drink. Whereupon the two little girls were sent to get fresh water from a well about a hundred yards from the house and at the foot of a steep hill. The children seemed not to mind the stiff climb and said that they packed most of the water used in the household. Despite their fairylike appearance, they are strong as young pine knots, and the buckets they carry are not large. We were shown the hastily cleared young apple orchard, of which the Carpenters are inordinately proud. They consider that they have done wonders in the four years since taking up their claim, are confi-

dently expecting to pick an income from those trees after another year or so and thenceforth to live in luxury. Their more experienced neighbors believe that the Carpenters are destined to disappointment, for so eager were the husband and wife to get the trees planted and growing, that many scrub oak roots were left in the ground.

No scrub oak breeding places for apple-tree-destroying insects are in my orchard. I had read and heard so much about the mischief done by them that in order to prevent any such misfortune I frequently made what the fraternally frank Richard terms "a fool of myself." Whenever a patch of that land was being plowed over I followed directly behind the plowman and saw to it that no tiniest bit of a root was covered by the scattered earth clods. Naturally, this surveillance enraged the agriculturist, but to have declared that he would not submit to it would have been to jeopardize a daily wage of five dollars for himself and his team. The five acres designed for peaches are now in readiness for the plowing to be done this autumn, although the infant trees are not to be set out until next spring. Peaches mature and yield a crop at the end of two years. Long before mine can be expected to bear fruit, I shall probably be in dire need of money. Unless a financial miracle happens, I shall be unable to clear more land—I had been thinking of experimenting with grapes

—until the apple orchard has yielded a large crop. My original capital is now reduced to a few hundred dollars which must be husbanded as an emergency fund. I simply never allow myself to think about clothes. Whenever anybody sends me a fashion magazine, I say, "Get thee behind me, Satan," and hand the torment to a neighbor. So obsessed am I with the craze for improving this place that I can readily imagine myself sacrificing every consideration of personal vanity to its cause. Doubtless I shall, sooner or later, present myself at Letter Box Grove in garments fashioned from gunny sacking. The wardrobe that came here with me is now so shabby that even Evelyn Gibbons pities me. I can see that in her eyes. Yet solely because of the rapid rise in land value hereabout, I am several thousand dollars richer—or less poor—than upon the day that Seldie and I set up housekeeping in the ten-by-fourteen-foot tent. Each season greatly increases the value of that portion of the home "forty," planted with apple trees since those acres represent a "going orchard." And going orchards, according to age and condition, have been selling around here for from one thousand to sixteen hundred dollars the acre. After two more years I should harvest a crop which should sell for not less than a thousand dollars. The fifth year, according to Richard, who is prone to err on the side of pessimism, the crop should net two hundred dol-

lars to the acre. Few, indeed, are the metropolitan hack writers who earn a much larger income year after year. To them lean seasons are liable to occur with appalling frequency and to begin with stunning suddenness.

Prior to Seton's coming, it was our habit to write long, carefully phrased letters between breakfast and mail-carrier time, but since that lively youth has been about the place, the morning hours, developing wings, have flown so rapidly that the warning ten strokes of the clock usually forces us to wind up our effusions with an abruptness which must amaze their recipients. It is an unwritten law that everyone shall be in readiness to leave the shack for Letter Box Grove by ten-fifteen. When we shall return from this excursion is always a problem for the rural letter man, scheduled to pass our *al fresco* station at eleven o'clock, reaches there at any time before one. The homesteader who goes for the family mail must be resigned to the sacrifice of an entire morning because of the uncertainty of Uncle Sam's delegate.

None of the people who regularly assemble at the grove are of the farming class. A surprising feature of fruit-growing in the Pacific Northwest is that the bulk of it is not done by farmers. On the contrary, nearly every other trade, occupation and profession is represented. In Klickitat county alone may be found machinist, chemist, dentist, lawyer,

schoolteacher and trade-laborer orchardists. Few of us have passed the period of middle-age. Most of us are work-roughened. All of us are exceedingly thin. Not constitutionally, but dietetically. We could scarcely be otherwise in a region which does not regularly afford fresh vegetables, fruit, fish or meat. Nor is our garb picturesque. The majority of us are in the coarse garments of the sweat shops. The men mostly wear overalls, which are clean on Mondays and soiled on Saturdays, as Sunday is the fashionable time for changing raiment in this region. The women affect cheap, fancy blouses with skirts of the type best adapted for sweeping the dust from the trails as they descend them, and shoes with Louis heels. They regard my broad-toed mountain boots with disgust, mingled with amazement at the size of my feet, and, in common with Mrs. Blacke-McCormick, consider my brief, scant skirt "fast." Few mothers come to the letter-boxes, because of having no one with whom to leave their young children, but meeting the carrier is regarded as an outing by the childless wives, most of whom are regularly at the grove. One of these women is Mrs. James Greene, a typical Larrikiness from St. Louis, Mo., where her husband was formerly a cab-driver. She has a petite, trim figure, abundant, elaborately arranged, dust-toned hair, a sallow complexion, a discontented expression, a common-school education, and unlimited

self-confidence. When the possibility of having a district schoolhouse erected near the grove was recently being discussed by the settlers, assembled at the letter-boxes, Mrs. Greene announced that she would take charge of it. No doubt she could conduct it quite as successfully as a licensed teacher. Certainly she could exercise better government than most teachers, for her voice and eyes would promptly terrify any obstreperous child into obedience. The squaws hereabout refer to Mrs. Greene as the "wise white woman," and often bring to her shack an ill papoose or a toddling child, for, having been the oldest of her mother's large family and having aided in the rearing of the younger children, she is qualified to prescribe for almost any infantile ailment, and unafraid to do so. Mr. Greene, two years the junior of his capable wife, customarily addresses her as "Mame," while she usually refers to him as "that boy." Their claim is about a mile north of the Loring's, and to reach their home they are obliged to cross that ranch. Consequently, the families are on intimate terms, although the two men are of widely dissimilar habits. Young Greene works at whatever he can get to do. Loring works only when, his thirst for firewater having become intolerable, he must earn the dollar with which to buy it.

Some of our neighbors still have enough water for their stock and can keep it hereabout instead of on

the grazing lands many miles up country. These fortunate persons ride to Letter Box Grove. Percy Nelson comes on Nan, who, when not otherwise engaged, loafs up and down the center of the county road, and never gets out of the way until forcibly pushed aside by the driver of whatever vehicle is approaching her.

Another equestrian is Percy's cousin, recently arrived from England. This seventeen-year-old girl, having been apprenticed to a dressmaker in the provincial town of her birth, is far and away the most stunningly garbed female in this region. Although block-shaped and dough-featured, her big, blank, blue eyes and brilliantly fresh complexion allied to her position as sole heiress of her father's homestead, make her the belle at all the local festivities. Miss Lucy Nelson is wonderfully fortunate in having Percy as an escort, as no calamity short of sudden death could prevent him from attending a dance, picnic or strawberry festival. The first time that we saw this young English maiden, her riding costume consisted of high-heeled, low-cut shoes, a fancifully made frock, and an elaborately trimmed picture hat. With her shoulders awkwardly drawn forward and her chin resting upon her chest, she sat Nan, the Balke, as solidly as though she were a graven image. Coming abreast of us she halted her steed by jerking at its bridle and commanding her to "wait." This phrase-

ology perfectly delighted Richard, because it was an additional proof of his theory that most British and American women do not appreciate the richness of the English tongue.

That morning the mail stage was very late, indeed. As it halted at the letter-boxes a kodak highwayman, seated beside the driver, held us up: "I've never seen so many of you people here before!" he exclaimed. "It's too good a chance to lose. Everybody look pleasant now, while I immortalize your mugs." With the ungraceful English maiden in the front of the picture, we all posed, several of us sincerely hoping that the plate would prove a blank disappointment to the operator. The mail wagon was carrying an unusual number of passengers. In addition to the amateur photographer, there were two languid-looking, middle-aged men who sat at the rear of the vehicle, their feet hanging over, while on the two passenger seats were crowded a couple of faded, shabby women, six half-grown children, and a thin old man. The old man held in his arms a querulous infant of teething age, but he smiled so cordially as our eyes met that I stepped to his side, and, because he was loquacious, soon learned that his destination was fifteen miles further up country where he was taking up a homestead for the benefit of his two sons. They, having sold relinquishments of land in eastern Oregon, had forfeited further homesteading rights.

"Them boys," indicating the two middle-aged men, "is restless like. They don't stay long nowheres. This is our third move in five years."

It seems sad that so old a person should be forced to take up life on a frontier where conditions are hard even for the young, strong and hopeful, and I wondered if the baby's patient nurse did not consider that Fate was being unnecessarily harsh with him at the sunset of his life. Yet he looked quite happy as he chirruped to the peevish grandchild, and, perhaps, the living with his children and grandchildren on his own land will be a sufficient compensation. Doubtless, this third move will be the last one despite the restlessness of "them boys," since the homesteader who at the age of seventy-five files a claim may reasonably expect to die upon it.

Greene and Loring had been on strained terms for several days past; in fact, since their respective wives had had a quarrel born of a too close intimacy. The unpleasantness nearly reached a violent climax this morning. Mrs. Gibbons, Seldie and I were strolling homeward from the letter-boxes when our attention was attracted by the loud voices of angry men. Then followed a string of oaths at which Seldie, a good Catholic, shuddered violently, the while crossing herself piously, and at which Mrs. Gibbons was not in the least shocked as she constantly hears equally choice diction from her husband and Ed Frost. Nat-

urally, we paused to satisfy our curiosity. Near a forge which Mr. Barney has set up under the willows at Fleitmanhurst, we saw Loring and Greene, facing each other, exchanging compliments. The elder man looked a half-grown boy beside the younger one, who is tall, slender, firmly knit, and so strong that he could master the Professional Rester with one hand. We saw the gleam of a knife in Loring's right hand, but only for an instant. Mr. Barney, raising a brown, lean arm, sent the weapon whirling into the bushes. Then, pushing Loring aside as easily as he would have pushed a child from his path, he bade Greene continue his work and not waste time with "that thief." As Loring slunk off, Mr. Barney explained his reason for using the adjective. Last year while he and some other settlers were repairing the county road, one man remarked that during the previous night some pork had been stolen from a barrel outside of his shack. Whereupon Loring immediately exclaimed: "It wasn't me; you can all see there's no pork in my dinner pail."

Loring's eagerness to declare his innocence convinced the other men of his guilt and next day one of them, making an excuse for calling at Loring's house at noontime, found his wife cooking pork. As the family had not recently owned a pig nor had any money whatever, the consensus of opinion was that the head of the house was the culprit. This impres-

sion was further strengthened several weeks later when the "sod widower" was awakened late one night by cries of pain coming from the direction of his pork barrel. There he found Loring with one of his hands caught in a trap set among the pieces of meat. The Nelsons made the mistake of releasing the thief from his embarrassing predicament without delaying to summon their neighbors. A pity, too. Ocular demonstration is so much more convincing than verbal testimony.

After the excitement incident to the quarrel at Fleitmanhurst, Seldie, Evelyn and I went our separate ways. Richard and Seton had started early that morning for the Big Klickitat, expecting to remain there until evening, and hoping to catch a salmon. Since there was no luncheon to be prepared, I sauntered homeward through the west "eighty," taking the trail leading past Inspiration Point, a natural lawn running to a triangle overlooking a canyon, shaded by tall oaks and brightened by a lovely yellow flower of a species unknown to me. I often go there with the avowed purpose of reading but in reality to pass the time in day-dreaming. Collie goes, too, but of late the weather has been so excessively warm that, instead of chasing the squirrels or hunting the lizards residing thereabout, he lounges and dozes. That day I lingered long over the reading of my mail and sev-

eral times re-read one letter from a former society reporter for a New York daily, who had recently married an Irish gentleman of great wealth. Charming and unusual combination!

Since the day I was born with a mortgaged silver spoon in my mouth, I have felt the pinch of genteel poverty. And I have pined to ensnare the fancy of an Irish gentleman since I first encountered one of them between the covers of a Lever novel. Now that this reporter friend has a husband to take up all of her time and, just at first, her thoughts, she will probably forget to send the big bundles of periodicals on which she has been putting so many postage stamps that conscience reproached me every time that I counted their cost.

Collie was not with me that day, having been told to remain at home and take care of the shack. He had been left inside the gate, looking wistfully through the bars, but was awaiting me just outside of it in company with the two Jims. The father had taken the blanket from the back of the cayuse and spread it upon the ground for his son to stretch himself upon. Little Jim had been napping, but at Collie's bark of welcome, he sprang upright and eagerly showed how nicely the wounded hand was healing.

"Why don't you go inside the gate and sit under the tent?" I asked. "I should have been back hours

ago to feed Collie," for a conscience-stricken glance at my wrist-watch told me that it was four hours after his customary luncheon time.

Big Jim pointed to a small pink and white gingham figure beyond the tea tent: "We be here till she go 'way."

Not until I was close beside Evelyn Gibbons did I realize that she was crying. "Have you heard bad news since you left me?" I asked.

"No—no." She wiped her eyes and laughed nervously. "Only our shack's so hot and ugly, and I'm so tired of cooking and—and—everything. I thought you'd gone for butter to the Blacke-McCormicks or I wouldn't have come over here. Good-bye." She sprang up, pulled her sunbonnet far over her face, sped swiftly down the orchard's slope to the forest bordering it and was soon lost to sight among the tall timber. For a moment I wondered if she had been quarreling with her husband, but dismissed the thought instantly, for never had I heard them speak other than kindly to or of one another. When Mrs. Gibbons had disappeared, the two Jims, escorted by Collie, approached the tea tent, and, after making certain that the well-borers could not hear him, the elder Indian said: "You make paper talk for me on little black box?"

I nodded, and, leading the way to the living-room, got out the typewriter, adjusted the paper,

and glanced inquiringly at Jim. He dictated:

"Tell Sally come home. Little Jim cry for her. Big Jim want her."

"Sally been school. She know paper talk," explained the Indian. "She Goldendale now," mentioning a town about thirty miles distant.

"But will she go to the post-office?" I asked, fearing disappointment for the two Jims.

"Sally always ask Baldwin paper talk man what he got for her and she never get a paper talk in her life," replied the aborigine. He seemed perfectly certain that wherever his wandering spouse might go she would keep up her habit of demanding letters of postmasters.

"Anyhow, it's worth trying," I remarked, and addressed an envelope, but before it enclosed the letter, Big Jim dictated a postscript: "Tell Sally no come back soon, I take Lil' Jim—go 'way." Then, as though suddenly angered by the wife and mother's desertion, "I wait no longer than full moon. She no come, we Jims gone."

"Sally will come the day she gets this paper talk," I said, jumping up to go in search of Little Jim, who, wearied of exploring the interior of the shack, had opened the kitchen door. We found him standing close to the well-boring machinery, just as Gibbons, hastily moving backward, stumbled over Collie and kicked him viciously. As the dog howled, Little Jim

clenched his tiny brown fists and struck furiously at the legs of the well-borer, crying: "I kill you. Him bully dog!"

When the two Jims had departed with their letter, I ate my luncheon, then sought the lawn opposite the vegetable garden, and there passed the remainder of the sweltering afternoon, undisturbed by the familiar, steady grinding sound of the boring machinery. Col-lie, supposing that I was still inside the house, which is forbidden to him unless specially invited to enter it, remained close to the two machinists, unable to tear himself away from the proximity of humans, however unfriendly to himself, until near twilight when he turned the corner of the shack, probably having been inspired to desert the well-borers by an exceptionally violent hint from one or the other of them. Upon seeing me he uttered several short, softly modulated barks, which plainly said: "Why, I didn't know *you* were out of doors or I'd have been with you long ago." Then he dashed up to my chair, settled himself at my feet, and sighed happily. His thick, yellow coat warmed my ankles uncomfortably, yet whenever I moved them he pushed the closer, always keeping one paw upon my toes. Is there any affection so sincere as that of a dog? Is it strange that those of us who have long loved and finally lost such a companion are inconsolable?

CHAPTER XII

AFTER having scanned the skies for weeks in the hope of finding indications of rain, a shower suddenly overtook me one afternoon—Collie and Lila were in attendance—and compelled me to seek shelter in the district schoolhouse, a twenty-by-thirty-foot frame structure with a vestibuled door opening into the only room. Two rows of double desks face a platform supporting an unpainted pine table, a chair, a blackboard and a revolving globe.

On the platform sat the teacher. "Swede" Boyesen's younger children, looking like half-grown giants in contrast to the other scholars, sat next to the stove, which one of the girls was constantly stoking from the woodbox. As I entered, closely followed by the persistent Lila, a hulking youth of fourteen was reciting his history lesson. It was about Marco Polo, a personage whom he described as "a man that went round looking at all the new places in the world; then came home and told the rest of the people about them; then those people went. After he done all that, he wrote a book." The teacher, a commonplace young woman, did not criticize either the grammar of

the pupil or the account of the imaginatively gifted explorer. In truth, I gathered the impression that she did not suspect that Marco Polo was probably one of the greatest frauds known to the world's history.

Fortunately, the scholars did not notice Lila's presence as we entered the schoolroom, but Collie, whose personality always attracts attention, very nearly destroyed discipline. He was chasing a squirrel at the time that Lila and I sought shelter and did not miss us for some minutes. Then he appeared with a bound that shook the structure to its frail foundations. For a second he stood just within the door, his nose in the air, then, having located me at a far corner of the room, dashed forward, leaping recklessly over desks and overturning, in his career, an ink-well and a six-year-old scholar. I crowded Collie between my chair and the wall, then raised my eyes to meet the displeased frown of the teacher. She is a slender little person, with brown hair brushed primly away from a large-featured face, and, on that occasion, wore the dull-hued cloth skirt and shirt-waist, which seem to grow on all schoolma'ams. But she also wore French-heeled, tightly fitting tan shoes, thus indicating a pleasing leaven of worldliness, which might have encouraged me to cultivate her acquaintance had not Richard, weeks ago, taken time by the forelock and warned me against inviting her

here, in case I should ever encounter her. He firmly believes that most schoolteachers are at once ignorant and egotistical. Certainly that is a combination of faults impossible to reform.

The present incumbent at the district school will probably become more popular with her pupils' parents than did her predecessor. From Mr. Barney's account she was a woman of business acumen and quickly realized, after coming to this region, that by wearing her old clothes, as well as washing them whenever necessary, she could save two-thirds of her salary and devote that money to the development of a homestead, which she was planning to settle upon. This claim is located within a mile of the schoolhouse, and her ambition offered the parents of this neighborhood an opportunity to do a deed of philanthropy by assuring the teacher that she could have the school for the ensuing three terms. Alas! her superior breeding had won for her the dislike of the school trustees' wives and the eternal enmity of Mrs. Blacke-McCormick. Consequently, she was not permitted to renew her contract at the end of her first term of service. During her farewell address to her pupils, delivered from the platform of the school-room on commencement day, she paid off her long score to the envious harpies. In no measured terms, but in language so impersonal that, as one of the aggrieved matrons afterward remarked: "We just

had to sit there and listen to her without getting a chance to talk back," she let each of her enemies know precisely what she thought of her. But she had to abandon her homesteading plan.

Before reaching home that afternoon a second and heavier shower drenched us, much to the disgust of Lila. Like all of her kind, she dislikes to get wet only one degree less than she dislikes to earn a living by hunting mice and lizards. The long ramble in the cool air had made Collie so hungry that he eagerly devoured the cereal and milk mixture scorned by him at breakfast time, while I prepared supper for myself. Richard and Seton had gone to Spokane to buy groceries from a wholesaler, and without having taken formal leave of the dog who appeared not to miss them until twilight began to settle into night. For a while he wandered restlessly between the shack and the gate. Not until darkness had obscured the trails would he consent to return indoors. Then, apparently having abandoned the idea of expecting the men of the house, he stretched himself before the stove and there remained until, after a final test of the window catches, I shut him into the lean-to and went to bed. Sleep came readily, but from it I was awakened by what sounded like a persistent knocking upon the rear door. Springing up, I drew on a kimono and lighted a candle, the while listening intently, and, truth to tell, with rapidly pounding

heart. Again the knocking. The hands of the clock pointed to midnight and I wondered who could have found their way at so late an hour and on so dark a night to a shack almost a mile from the county road. Certainly it would be some person familiar with the trails through the woods. Yet not Mr. Barney or Mike. Either man would have shouted his own name while approaching the shack. No alarm came from Collie, who should have been barking furiously. Resolved to investigate, I extinguished the candle, firmly clutched the revolver, crossed the living-room, entered the kitchen, placed an ear to its outer door and listened. Not a sound came from without. Assured that alarm was needless, I flung the door wide open. As it swung back, Collie darted past me and cut through the curtain of dense gloom hiding the outline of fences, forest and storehouse. He had hammered the floor with his tail to signal his wish to go forth and forage. No more was heard from him that night. Doubtless, he was hunting for straps about the farm-yard of the Professional Rester. When Collie has been for days without a bone, he seeks for discarded bits of harness. These he worries to shreds with his sharp, white, young teeth. Anyhow, my alarm was unreasonable. A lone woman is safer on a ranch in a sparsely settled neighborhood than on the streets of a crowded city. No woman has been attacked in this region since the

Whitman massacre of very many years ago, when the Indians were avowedly on the warpath. The woman who homesteaded the Fleitmanhurst claim lived there absolutely alone for years after the marriage of her children, and never had a moment's cause for alarm. Yet that shack is scarcely a rod from the main road, and from a great distance its lighted windows can be seen.

Considerably nearer to this orchard stands a shack now deserted, but once occupied by a woman whose history—so much as we know of it—greatly amuses us. It is through a portion of this property that our illegal wagon track winds in order to connect us with the county road. The shack is superbly located upon a hill overlooking miles of wooded canyons and the Big Klickitat. In truth, this quarter section is valuable for the views to be obtained from its elevations as well as for the many tillable acres which it includes. Dozens of people have offered good prices for it, and the owner would gladly accept one of those offers were she able to furnish a satisfactory deed. She has, however, loved not wisely, but too frequently, and been five times married. Some of the helpmeets were divorced by her and others were deserted by her, or *vice versa*. Anyhow, all of these men are alive, and, as the lady cannot definitely remember to which of them she was wedded at the time of acquiring the homestead, she remains in straightened

circumstances, the while her land steadily increases in value. Richard cherishes the conviction that the woman homesteader was divorced or deserted by the five men and that she is a tarmagant. He quotes from Michael Morton's dramatization of the "Resurrection": "I know she is guilty (of being a tarmagant); all women are devils."

Beyond the absent homesteader's weed-grown chicken-yard, fenced with decrepit wire netting, is a three-acre alfalfa patch, the favorite grazing ground for bands of wandering ponies and cattle. Not far from there is the shack, a three-room plank affair, set so close to the ground and so imperfectly battened that it must be a cold dwelling place in winter. Nearly always we step over the prostrate rails of the wrecked fence between the road and the clearing, and closely scan a home which has an uncanny fascination for us. Through the window nearest to its door may be seen the interior of the kitchen. It contains a range, several cheap chairs and a table, the latter strewn with dishes, as though someone had recently had a meal there. A wide-open inner door discloses a sparsely furnished living-room and beyond that a tiny chamber containing a calico-draped dressing-table and a neatly made bed. From without, the interior of the shack looks spotlessly clean, but a closer view would probably disclose the accumulated dust of many months. Yet it is quite possible that the many

times married owner of this dwelling has been living in it at intervals within the past few weeks, and without the knowledge of her nearest neighbors. The families located north of that lonely home rarely drive along that road, and, unless at the time of their passing smoke were issuing from its chimney, they might readily overlook other signs of occupancy.

Of this woman's quarter section the only cleared portion is the alfalfa patch and a treeless half-acre immediately surrounding the dwelling, store house and barn. Several large oaks lie prostrate in the wire-enclosed chicken-run, now so overgrown with brush that a fowl imprisoned there could easily find a nesting place beyond the reach of any person not provided with an axe and the strength to wield it. Just beyond this home clearing stretch acres of forest, carpeted with pink and purple flowers. While wandering in these woods one day I came upon a ten-foot square enclosure, looking precisely like one of the private burial plots so frequently to be found on eastern farms. It was a most surprising discovery in this region, as thus far a white person is not known to have died here. A nearer view, however, showed that the fence surrounded a long-dried well, which, because situated in the heart of a forest, was enclosed in order to prevent accidents to persons unfamiliar with this neighborhood. Anyone walking alone in these woods and falling into that hole would

almost certainly perish of hunger, as cries for help would scarcely be heard by travelers on the nearest trail or road. Yesterday, after the return of Richard and Seton, I again passed close to the forgotten well, and noticed an empty whiskey flask lying inside its fence, a fact which would seem to indicate that neighbor Loring had recently been carousing thereabout. From the well, I wandered through the woods to Inspiration Point, and there spent the remainder of the afternoon alternately reading and watching the flickering shadows of the oak leaves upon the grass. The air was excessively warm and Collie lay panting at my feet. I had not invited him to accompany me, but shortly after I had left the shack Mr. Barney and several of the laborers watched him track me across the clearing. First he put his nose in the air, then sniffed about the ground from right to left, and, catching the scent, was soon on my trail. It would seem as though the dog might have preferred the excitement of watching the men roll huge oak logs from the edge of the clearing into a draw which flanks its west side, especially as he would have had the companionship of "Spottee," the white-patched "near" terrier of Mike. That Collie prefers the society of a woman to that of his own kind and a half-dozen men of almost as many different nationalities, seems to me to be an additional proof of his unusual intelligence and innate refinement. Richard thinks differently.

He says that Collie flatters me into giving him extra food. Would that this flattery could be better repaid. It is a fortnight since the dog has seen a bone, and he is so fed up with a cereal-and-milk diet that he eats that mixture only in preference to going hungry.

To-morrow morning I shall start on a hunting trip—for photographs with which to illustrate a magazine story on fruit raising in the Pacific Northwest. The trip will involve a six-mile walk to Baldwin, a ten-mile journey on a river steamer to The Dalles and a night's stay—probably in discomfort—somewhere along the Columbia. But the money promised for the article will do its bit toward developing my obsession—this orchard on a hilltop facing Mt. Hood.

CHAPTER XIII

IF Seton Postley, in accordance with his original itinerary, is to visit the Yellowstone on his way east, he would better be starting soon, for we are now well into November and his college term has long since begun. Despite the fact that he is an ideal guest and that we shall greatly miss him when he has finally departed, it is clear that he should be listening to lectures in Princeton's halls, instead of drying dishes at an apple orchard between the intervals of talking French with Evelyn Gibbons. Seton has been taking what he calls "conversation lessons in French" from the young wife of the well-borer for several weeks past; to be exact, from the instant she remarked that her mother was of French extraction, and had taught her to say a few things in that tongue. Obviously hearing those few things constantly repeated is what detains Seton in Klickitat. Seldie said as much to me a fortnight ago and ever since I have been worried.

"He knows that he'll have to be returning to Princeton soon," said Richard, when informed of my reason for wishing to speed the lingering guest. "As

it is, he'll need a coach to get him abreast of this term's lectures."

"Of late he never mentions his alma mater."

"Oh, well, it's just a boyish fancy for the only good-looking woman in this neighborhood," replied Richard ungallantly, and with the easy superiority of mental attitude which distinguishes the worldly man of middle age. "Seton will have forgotten all about that little bunch of nothing within a fortnight after leaving here." Yet Richard knows that the Postleys do not forget easily.

"Seton hasn't the faintest idea of leaving. Whenever I try to lead his thoughts back to his home and his college by talking of trains and timetables and Pullman reservations, he looks at me blankly, as though he had never heard of such matters. He can't stop on here forever," I continued irritably. "It—this isn't the proper way for the heir to millions of dollars to live. Moreover, the neighbors will talk about his attentions to the well-borer's wife."

"The neighbors can't reasonably gossip about that girl and Seton," replied Richard. "You're always tagging along whenever they go for one of those French *conversazione* rambles, which appear to be worrying you so much."

"I always try to be with them," I admitted brazenly, "but don't always manage to. Anyhow, the gossip of country neighbors never is governed by

reason." Roused to further irritation by the vexatious situation, I added: "When making that contract with Gibbons to bore a well for me, I didn't expect him to bring here a fascinating young wife for me to chaperone."

Richard suddenly became serious. "If Gibbons ever gets jealous, he'll make things lively for Seton. When a man of his type gets so wrapped up as he is in that little woman, he doesn't stop short of killing the object of his jealousy. And Seton doesn't mean any harm."

"Neither one of those French conversationalists means any harm, but that doesn't lessen my responsibility," I retorted gloomily, then hastened to contort my features into a welcoming grin, as Seton's cheery whistle and Collie's bark announced their return from Letter Box Grove.

In addition to the usual packets of letters and bundles of periodicals, Seton was laden with news of local importance. "Old Man Baldwin," as he was familiarly and affectionately called, had died the day before, and was to be buried on the morrow near the village. Every neighbor was expected to attend the funeral—the first to be held in this region and accounted a social event. The preparations for it had been under way for some days before the old settler's death, which was entirely due to his advanced age. His progress out of the world was not aided nor

retarded by a physician, because none lives within call.

"I knew *you* wouldn't go to the funeral, Richard," explained Seton, "and said as much to Mrs. Blacke-McCormick, who seems to have taken charge of the delegation from this section of the county." Then he addressed me directly: "The log house lady has assigned you a seat in a hack with those Oelsens, the new Swedes who live next to Rawle. And Rawle's to drive Miss Seldon, the Gibbons' and me to Baldwin, in his freight wagon. But as he isn't coming back here to-morrow, I've sent a note to Mr. Tanner asking him to secure a carriage large enough to bring six people home late to-morrow afternoon."

The "new Swedes," as the Oelsens are called, quite properly describe themselves as Americans, since both of them were born and reared in Dakota. They came for me the following morning. The wife, who has bovine brown eyes, a dull, moon-shaped face and barely five feet of height, was at first exceedingly shy, and replied to my remarks in monosyllables, tacked to "ma'am," until we reached the top of Mullen Hill. There an approaching pair of horses drawing an unwieldy wagon, forced our vehicle to the outer edge of the road, which is also the edge of the precipice, and my frankly expressed fear of being spilled into eternity via de Petrio Canyon greatly amused her and effectively broke the shell of the si-

lence that held her. For the remainder of the drive to Baldwin, she chattered unceasingly about the region and the neighbors, especially the women. Although she has lived hereabout for barely a fortnight she seems to know everything about everybody in the county. Realizing that a person so well posted and so loquacious is likely to prove a dangerous one in a small community, and, fearing to be misquoted to her next audience, I, in turn, became monosyllabic, minus the "ma'am."

Since Baldwin boasts neither church nor schoolhouse, the funeral services for the pioneer who gave that hamlet its name were held close to the Columbia river in the grove where Seton had first caught a glimpse of Mrs. Gibbons. Behind the rows of chairs occupied by the settlers, wearing cheap "store" clothes, was a line of Indians in gaudy blankets. Beyond the aborigines could be seen the still darker faces, crowned by tall turbans, of a score or so of Hindoo laborers employed by the Northern Pacific Railway Company. In marked contrast to the restless movements and sibilant whisperings of the white members of the assemblage was the dignified repose of the Indians and the Hindoos. Those representatives of an aboriginal race and an alien race stood like graven images and listened intently while John Tanner, as usual bare-headed, read the prayers for the dead and Seldie sang a hymn, although few of them

could have understood the meaning of the words, which at times were drowned by the clanging bell of a shifting engine in the adjacent railway yards or the shrill whistle of a steamer on the Columbia. After the services were over with and "friends wishing to look at the remains" had filed past the casket, the old pioneer was borne by relatives to his final resting place in an adjacent field. Quietly the Indians and Hindoos faded from the scene while tables were set for the open-air luncheon, to which each settler had contributed.

"To think of Old Man Baldwin not owning six feet of earth to be buried in," observed Mr. Montmorenci Jones, who sat beside me. "He gave this village its name and at one time owned the land that it stands upon, but he was in too big a hurry to sell out to Arthur Dalfour, an English capitalist. While the Spokane, Portland and Seattle road was building, folks round here kept saying that some day Dalfour'd get Jim Hill, but it came the other way round, because, after the railroad got as far as this, whatever portion of Dalfour's holdings were needed were sold to it under a condemnation suit, and at a lower figure than his, too."

"Them North Bank fellers can fence in Baldwin when they like, an' none of us fellers dassent try to prevent 'em from doin' of it. They own all but a few streets what had been recorded, an' two or three

town lots," explained Mr. Mat Bollen, second oldest settler in Klickitat.

"Couldn't you move the village?" I hazarded.

Mr. Bollen removed his knife from his mouth to ask: "Whar to? See," pointing with his blade up and down the Columbia, "them high bluffs to the east an' west runs sheer to the water's edge an' wouldn't give foothold to a goat. An' behind us is Dalfour's basin. Baldwin jes' has to be whar it is—or no-whar."

Mrs. Blacke-McCormick, decorated with her D. A. R. jewelry, and seated at the opposite side of the table, transfixed Mr. Mat Bollen with her hard gray eyes, and said with an air of finality, which effectually suppressed that citizen for the remainder of the meal: "The railroad company ain't got a thing to do with this village and it can't be moved because there's always been a trading place at this point." She doubtless meant to convey the information that there has been a boat landing of sorts and a supply store near the present by-the-grace-of-the-North-Bank-Railway village since white men first began to settle along the banks of the Columbia.

"Mebbe you think the railroad ain't done this part of Klickitat no good," observed Seldie from her post of honor at the head of our table.

Past experience has convinced Mrs. Blacke-McCormick of the unwisdom of engaging in a tilt of

words with Seldie. Therefore she deliberately presented a broad black taffeta back to her enemy's gaze and proceeded to lead conversation at our end of the board by talking about the well at the colonial replica in logs: "It's four hundred feet deep and cost Mr. Blacke-McCormick nearly two thousand dollars."

"The infernal liar!" muttered the real estate gentleman beside me after purposely dropping a spoon upon the ground and recovering it by stooping close to my ear.

"That's a great deal of money," continued the Illinois D. A. R. member, this time directly addressing me. I did consider the sum mentioned a great deal of money and many hundred dollars more than the actual cost of the vaunted well. Moreover, she had several times previously said something of the sort to me. "I hear you ain't struck no water yet," she added, with a note of triumph in her voice. "As you're likely paying for your ranch in instalments, my advice is to throw the whole quarter section back on to the man you bought it off'n of. A place without water's no good." The last remark is a favorite one with all of the McCormicks and is worked on every possible occasion.

"In less'n a week my boss'll have plenty of water on her place and then her ranch'll be good enough for anybody. From what I see of your seepage

well, it'll likely dry up any day." These remarks emanated from Mr. Barney, who had been assigned to a place at our table by Seldie, inspired by an amiable wish to annoy Mrs. Blacke-McCormick, who considers our foreman what he considers himself—an upper servant. It is the sole point on which the two are in accord.

Mrs. Blacke-McCormick, disdaining to reply to the remarks of a person so low in the social scale as is Mr. Barney, proceeded to cross-examine me in regard to Seton Postley, who, seated at a distant table, was beyond earshot. My monosyllabic replies must have proved annoying to her as she eventually changed to another seat, not, however, before giving Seldie and I to understand that while Klickitat society was getting "dreadful mixed" there was not the faintest hope that we could ever break into it. In order that I might have a cheering word to bear to Richard, she added that, aside from her husband, the only other gentleman hereabout is Mr. Sidney Talman, a young man of independent fortune and notoriously idle habits, who maintains bachelor hall on a ranch about three miles to the west of us. He chiefly lives at Baldwin and passes his days in loafing about its sole livery stable.

Luncheon over with, Evelyn Gibbons, Seldie and Seton announced that they had errands at the general store. While awaiting their pleasure, I wan-

dered about the village, and eventually encountered the ex-wife of Francis Rawle, who invited me into her home—the shack at the back of her store—for a cup of hot tea. There we were joined by the man for whom she had deserted her husband and the little home in the hills. The affinity, a gaunt, unshaven, shambling, collarless creature, stood in cracked patent kid pumps and carried with affected jauntiness a thread-bare cutaway suit. The woman's peevishly coquettish manner toward this man would have been droll amid different surroundings. It was pathetically grotesque in the shed which she dignifies by the term "dining-room." Her clawlike brown hands, jaundiced face, dust-hued straggling locks and attenuated figure in its tawdry finery made a forlorn picture not easily forgotten. She had invested the whole of her three-thousand-dollar share of her ex-husband's estate in the little store which has just been taken over by a creditor who has assumed her accounts against various homesteaders together with the depleted stock of the place. This action leaves her free to go forth and work out her own salvation and, incidentally, a livelihood, as best she can. In less than five years after forsaking the ranch near Mullen Hill's brow she is homeless, penniless and without a shred of the youthful bloom that attracted the loafer for whose sake she sacrificed her own

chance of happiness and those of the good man who entrusted to her the honor of his name.

"What is Baldwin etiquette for a divorced husband and wife?" I later on inquired of Mr. Tanner. "This village is so tiny that the various pairs of persons now legally separated must meet a dozen times daily." The query was prompted by the sight of Francis Rawle driving his four horses past his ex-wife's residence while she was seated on its doorstep.

"Divorced couples livin' here jest has to get hardened to meetin'," replied the white-haired old pioneer. "If they wanted to avoid one another, where could they go?"

I shook my head.

"When anybody does anything in this village," continued the old pioneer, "everybody else knows all about it—immediate. They all on 'em hear everythin' that's said and see near everythin' that's done. They know when I change my mind. If I wanted to tell you a secret we'd have to go to the woods."

This lack of privacy was further impressed upon me as we were about to start for home. "She ain't too much tickled about somethin'," remarked Mr. Jack Gibbons, motioning with his unkempt hand toward an Indian girl seated on the ground near the larger store. With her small brown hands the young aborigine hugged her knees as she rocked her slender, lithe body. Her coarse, long, black locks

streamed over her shoulders, tears literally washed her full cheeks and at intervals she loudly moaned. Around her stood several matronly looking squaws, regarding her intently, silently. One of these Indian women wheeled sharply and stepped directly in front of the grief-stricken girl as though to shield her from the curious gaze of Mrs. Blacke-McCormick, who fairly shouldered her way into the circle of aboriginals.

"Is that young person sick?" inquired the leader of Kluclitak society in her sharp, authoritative tones.

"She love one Injun man—he go 'way," was the explanation of the squaw who was trying to protect the weeping girl from the white woman's hard eyes.

"The idee of her worryin' like that! Why don't she rustle round an' corral another beau, bein' as how one Injun's just as bad as another!" philosophized Mr. Gibbons.

"Wouldn't that jar you?" whispered Seton, who had just come to my other side. Then he addressed the well-borer: "Are you quite ready to start for home, Mr. Gibbons? The hack is here."

"Ain't goin' home to-night. Me an' my wife'll stay at the hotel an' ride up with the mail-carrier to-morrow morning," was the gracious reply.

Although Seton was surprised at this sudden change of plan on the part of Mr. Gibbons, he merely

remarked that he was sorry not to have the pleasure of his society on our return trip. He then assisted me to the front seat of Mr. Tanner's hack and beside Mr. Mat Bollen, whom the storekeeper had employed to drive us home.

"Who is that Indian girl?" I inquired in a low tone.

Mr. Bollen glanced over the heads of the circle of squaws toward the slender figure that was still rocking itself to and fro upon the ground, and his faded, kindly blue eyes were moist as he explained: "That's Sally, what's married to Big Jimmy. He has jest went away an' took their kid with him an' no one don't know whar they've gone. Seems that he sent her a paper talk sayin' as how he'd forgive her for gettin' mad with him if she'd come back before the full of the moon. But Sally didn't get the letter until this mornin'. Now that she's come back, she's too late. But, shucks; we've had 'nough of mournfulness for one day. Let's talk about somethin' cheerin'."

Mr. Mat Bollen's further discourse was so entertaining and his management of the lively pair of cayuses so skilful that I forgot my fears of the narrow road running parallel with the railway tracks and became interested in watching the gangs of Hindoos working upon them. These dark-skinned, aquiline-featured, tall, gaunt men may be seen at

early morning, high noon or twilight along the banks of the Columbia and the Big Klickitat, engaged in washing as much of their apparel as can modestly be discarded at one time. Whatever money they save is probably concealed in the turban which apparently never is removed and which, if not originally black, has been made so by grime and soot. Whenever these exiles wish to buy anything they wander about a store until the article is discovered and then point to it. Few of them learn to speak English, but all of them know American money values.

"Nobody can't cheat them niggers," said Mr. Bollen, "but anybody could do them two Dalfour boys what used ter live there." With an airy wave of his whip he indicated a house standing on a bluff at the east of Baldwin, and overlooking that aggregation of shacks and wall tents as well as the Columbia which flows past it. The gabled-roofed house is the most pretentious edifice this region boasts, although its painted walls have faded from yellow to grimy white and its curtainless, blindless windows stare like sightless eyes. "Folks round here used to say that Arthur Dalfour—that's the name of them boys' pa—was a big iron master in England, same's our Andy Carnegie. I guess he bought all that land on both sides of the Big Klickitat, includin' the Baldwin town site, so's ter have some place to send his boys ter. He told a feller here that they was each on

'em a-spendin' one thousand pounds—that's five thousand dollars in our money——" he interpolated for the general instruction of his passengers—"a year in London, an' thought that half that money'd ought to keep 'em comfortable in Klickitat, while they was developin' the land an' learnin' how to work."

According to our cicerone, this scheme of the British ironmaster's was half successful. Johnny, the younger of the brothers Dalfour, took an active interest in the ranch and was up early mornings, following the laborers about the place and superintending their work. Billy stayed in bed most of the day and spent the remainder of it in lounging about the house and smoking a pipe. Throughout the summers they entertained relays of English and American guests, for the substantially furnished house was cared for by a well-trained staff of domestics; fish, game and fruit were abundant, and the stables sheltered many good horses. During the autumn Billy temporarily flung aside his lassitude and organized hunting parties to Mount Adams and other points within fifty miles of Baldwin. In those halcyon days such sport equaled any to be had west of the Rockies.

For ten years the Dalfour boys, as they were familiarly known to the Baldwin residents, lived on their American holdings, whereon Johnny planted

and raised a quantity of fine grapes and apples. But because, at that time, no railway passed near to the village, and no steamers stopped regularly at its wharf, these crops could not be marketed. Eventually the trees and vines were taken from the ground and the entire property given over to the breeding of horses. Then came a day when the house was dismantled, and placed in charge of a caretaker. The Dalfour boys bade farewell to their Klickitat friends and departed for England. Rumor says that Billy, to prove that he could summon sufficient energy for the pursuit of whatever he deemed worth the trouble, subsequently married a Russian lady of title, beauty and wealth. Johnny remains a bachelor, and fancy free so far as Klickitat county knows of his recent history.

Having disposed of the brothers Dalfour, Mr. Bollen began to talk about himself as I had been sure that he ultimately would, since men are the most confiding creatures on earth and ready to tell their life history to whatever woman is willing to listen to it. The biography which this under-sized, wrinkled, wiry old pioneer related was one of adventure from start to finish. He was a mere lad when he started west in the early fifties, crossed the Missouri at Omaha, walked across the plains and the great American desert. "In the sixties, when I went a-visitin' back east," he said, "we traveled by a good

wagon road through a peaceful country. In them days the Injuns was peaceable and they stayed so until the whites deviled 'em." He chortled merrily. "We certainly did have lively times with 'em later."

When we reached de Petrio Canyon, Mat Bollen remarked: "Old Mother Natur' was just a-kickin' up ructions when she made that thar slit." Then he explained that the vast gulley was named in honor of the de Petrio family, who were among the earliest white settlers in Klickitat county. The first de Petrio was an Italian employed by the Hudson Bay Company. Wandering inland from the Columbia, until he came upon land promising an abundance of water, he took up a quarter section at the head of the great canyon which now bears his name and built there a log cabin, to which he brought his bride. She was the daughter of a settler living on the bank of the Columbia below what is now the village of Hood River, Oregon. As her father was a Frenchman and her mother the daughter of a Frenchman and a Klickitat woman, the young Italian's bride was three-quarters French and one-quarter Indian. The aboriginal strain plainly shows in the high cheek bones, coppery complexion and dull, straight black hair of her sons. "For all they talk an' dress an' act like we-folks, anyone would know them two de Petrio boys for Injuns," declared Mr. Bollen. "Yet their ma, who's more Injun than they be, looks like

an American. Why," he added suddenly, "Mis' de Petrio was a-settin' in a hack outside the post-office this afternoon. Don't you remember seein' her?"

We distinctly remembered seeing the woman described and had remarked upon her refined appearance, delicately moulded features, clear brunette complexion and modishly arranged gray-streaked brown hair. Because of the care given to every detail of her toilet we had mentally labeled her a city woman stopping with friends in the neighborhood.

"Mis' de Petrio's grandchildren looks like reg'lar little Injuns," continued the local historian, "for all their calico aprons an' tan shoes. If they was wearin' blankets an' moccasins you couldn't tell 'em from the kids o' Josie Skookum's pals." Mr. Bollen then explained that many of those early river men were French employees of the Hudson Bay Company and that from them have descended the numerous families hereabout who bear French names but show unmistakable evidences of aboriginal ancestry. In the old days it was a common thing for a river man or a trader to acquire an Indian helpmeet and rear a family. These breeds nearly always married amongst the white settlers and lived in a civilized manner. Consequently the contemporary or third generation is an amazing mixture of Swede, German, French, Portuguese, Italian, Slav and Indian blood. Not infrequently one of these people will evidence the

aboriginal strain in high cheek bones and a dark skin, the Saxon in light eyes and brown hair, and the Latin in a love for dress and diversions.

Several specimens of this mixture of races live in Klickitat county. The younger members of these families not only assume a position of equality with the settlers from the east but take unto themselves airs of exclusiveness, greatly to the amusement or the exasperation of those unadulterated Caucasians who cherish a prejudice against hybrids. The ancient pioneer drew from his trousers' pocket a small, leather-bound case. "This here's a picter of the squaw of Colonel Mitchell, an old forty-niner pal o' mine." He went on to say that the Colonel had partially succeeded in civilizing his squaw as was evidenced by the daguerreotype which shows her in the full-frilled bonnet and the embroidered *visite* of the fifties. On the lap of her flounced skirt, this red lady holds her first-born son. Despite the kid-slippered little feet, a daintily embroidered linen frock, his mother's garb and a civilized "back drop," this infant is the replica of the papooses swathed in rags and strapped to boards borne on the backs of the Klickitat squaws of to-day. The descendants of this pioneer Colonel and his Indian wife dwell near the Columbia river on a place formerly owned by a wealthy Irishman, his wife and young sons. From their forest properties these aristocratic hermits

culled enough logs of matching size to build a huge cabin which they equipped with deep-chested fireplaces and furnished in primitive manner. Skins covered the floors, trophies of the chase adorned the walls and gayly colored blankets draped settles and chairs. Each member of the family was devoted to hunting, but it was the mother's rifle and rod that furnished meat and fish for a large household comprising a secretary, a tutor and a staff of British domestics.

"Colonel Mitchell an' his wife's got so high-toned they don't notice the likes o' me nowadays, but me an' that Irish lady what used to own their place was big pals," continued Mr. Bollen. "We went a-huntin' together frequent an' pretty near allus had luck. As soon as we'd get near the house, she'd begin whistlin' for her boys. Them little fellers allus carried sheath knives at their belts an' it was plum amazin' how quick they'd skin a dead creetur without injurin' of its pelt. The purtiest hides was used for floor an' bed covers, an' the others for chaps an' moccasins."

What must have been an idyllic existence was perforce terminated when the boys reached college age. The family returned to Ireland, leaving their Pacific Northwest ranch, its big log cabin and its unique furnishings in the hands of an agent to be sold to

the first person who would pay a reasonable price for it

"How's that fer a barn?" Mr. Bollen indicated a structure toppling close to the road beyond the north rim of de Petrio canyon. The building is of logs placed so far apart that no windows are needed, since the sun shines into it as freely as the winds blow through it. The winter sleets and rains readily chill the animals which the edifice is supposed to shelter. "Few Injuns take extra care of their stock but that buck and squaw what owns this homestead is awful shif'less, even fer redskins. Don't you never lend 'em nothin' fer you won't never get it back. An' the only way to keep from lendin'—which means givin' 'em—things is not to git too friendly. Their house ain't much better'n their barn," he added. Following the direction of his whip-handle, we saw a weather-beaten shack set far back from the highway and showing no indications of being occupied. "Guess the Injun an' his squaw has went away," surmised Mr. Bollen. "Lots of 'em goes to the mountains at this season an' takes all their belongin's with 'em. If we was to break into that shack now we wouldn't find so much as a rusty pan. Tell you what it is, lady, the one way to get ahead in this country is to keep everlastin'ly on the job. No one can't afford to turn their back upon their homestead

fer a week. I s'pose," he queried, eyeing me sharply, "you've waded a lot o' shoal places sense you took up orchardin'. Well," giving my hand an encouraging pat, "stick to it, never lookin' back once, an' you'll win out. Four years from the time you planted them trees you'll be eating a few big red apples what grewed upon 'em. The next year you'll have more apples, and the year after that—the good Lord permittin'—you'll pick an income off'n that hillside orchard at Mira-Monte." I am sure Mr. Bollen is right. Anyhow, only sure defeat shall ever make me abandon apple-growing!

CHAPTER XIV

SINCE the funeral of Old Man Baldwin, Evelyn Gibbons has not been once to this ranch nor have we seen her at the letter boxes. Seton has not mentioned her name to either Richard or myself and we do not know whether or not he has seen her within the past few days. Gibbons is more than ever morose and scowling but this may be for the reason that the machine has been drilling through a strata of rock so hard that the outfit has not earned the wage of one man. This morning he tried to make an excuse for permanently stopping work upon the well, saying that he knew we were tired of having him upon the place. We are. Nevertheless he was assured that it is not now our intention to abandon the boring effort to obtain water and that in case he breaks the contract by stopping without our consent no more money will be forthcoming. Unable to draw any of us into an altercation, Gibbons sulkily returned to his position at the back of the machine and we departed for Letter Box Grove. There we found an unusually large gathering of settlers, among them Mrs. Blacke-McCormick, who of late

comes daily to meet the mail-carrier. Her first remark was launched at Richard: "Well, Mr. Van Cortlandt, what do you think of the doings and the carryings-on of the married women round here?"

"Most of the married women living hereabout have so much work to occupy them that they haven't time to devote to 'doings and carryings-on,'" Richard replied, the while looking appealingly toward Seldie, who was prompt with the desired aid.

"That's dead right," said Seldie. "The house-keeper living in this neighborhood has all that she can do to mind her own business and do it well. The woman that's got time to watch her neighbors is running a pretty slack-looking place."

"That Gibbons woman oughtn't to be let stay in this neighborhood—if half that folks say about her is the truth," persisted Mrs. Blacke-McCormick, again addressing herself to Richard.

"If any persons in this neighborhood are slandering Mrs. Gibbons—and whatever evil is said about her must be a slander—they would best not talk within the hearing of Mr. Gibbons," replied Richard, then, turning toward Mr. Blacke-McCormick and directly addressing him: "The man who traduces that little woman is likely to have his system filled full of shot from Gibbons' gun."

"They've got no property here and oughtn't to be living here getting the money that should be going

to decent folks," said Mrs. Blacke-McCormick, her voice trembling with anger.

Seldie saw her opportunity and seized it. "So you've gone into the well-boring business! You can come down to my place and bore whenever you're able to prove that you can deliver the goods."

The leading lady of the county glared at Seldie and might have said something not commensurate with the dignity of an Illinois D. A. R. had not Mrs. James Greene created a diversion—not because she is a natural peacemaker but because she adores imparting news: "There's word of Injun Jim," she announced. "Mike, the Eyetalian, met him and little Jim yesterday at The Dalles and told him how Sally's hunting for them two all over the county, and is near crazy because she can't find them. Mike offered to pay their fare if they'd come along home with him that minute, so Big Jim picked up the kid and come straight along."

"How did Mike know about Sally?" asked Percy Nelson.

"He was at Baldwin the day of the funeral and when he made Injun Jim understand about the way that squaw felt because she hadn't got that paper talk in time, he couldn't get back there fast enough. When the two Jims got to Josie Skookum's shack last night Sally wasn't there. She'd took one of the cayuses an' gone lookin' for them up-country. Now

nobody can tell when she'll be this way again and Injun Jim's just wild. It certainly is surprising how easy folks can lose one another in this country! There was Sally taking on like mad down at Baldwin the other day and thinking that the two Jims was lost to her forever, and all the while—Mike says—they were just a few miles up the Columbia. Big Jim was working for a Clackamas Injun fisherman, living this side of The Dalles, and little Jim was playing every day along the banks of the river where any of us traveling on a steamer could have seen him. And that Clackamas Injun's wife didn't even know that Big Jim had a wife living."

Mrs. Blacke-McCormick spoke in her most majestic manner: "It was exceedingly strange that that Clackamas squaw did not know whether or not Big Jim had a wife. I can't understand such indifference."

"Certainly *you* can't," agreed Seldie. "Indians are too well mannered to butt into other folks' business." Having routed her foe, she plunged into a highly colored description of the improvements she was making at her boarding camp, thereby holding the interest of the by-standers until the coming of the mail-carrier.

As we were separating, after receiving our mail, Seldie hissed in my ear: "Those cat ladies didn't

get a second chance to-day to tear Evelyn Gibbons to bits!"

So accustomed had we become to the sound and the vibrations caused by the heavy machinery at the rear of the shack that I was not aware that they had ceased until a resounding knock summoned me to the kitchen door late that afternoon. The well-borer stood on the step and his dark, coarse-featured face was radiant as that of a pictured archangel's. "I've struck water," he announced, trying to speak indifferently but unable to keep a jubilant note out of his voice.

"How much water?" I inquired, being a person of small faith in the statements of the lower strata of society.

"Lots of it."

"Is it good water?"

"Clear as crystal. Will I stop boring or will I go on?" ungrammatically inquired Mr. Gibbons.

"If you continue to bore, will there be danger of losing the water?"

"There ain't the slightest danger of losing the water. The flow might be even stronger if I was to go on for another few feet."

"Continue work for another hour," I said, anxious to get the advice of Richard, who, with Seton, had gone over to Fleitmanhurst to superintend some

slight repairs to the well of that place. Without delaying to change my house shoes for substantial footgear, I ran across the trail to the well-borer's temporary home. Richard, Mr. Barney and Mike were gathered near the forge; Mrs. Barney was washing clothes under the willows; Evelyn Gibbons and Seton were seated side by side upon a log watching the Barney children build block forts.

"Guess what has happened—everyone!" was my greeting.

"They've struck water," accurately guessed Mr. Barney. "Someone had ought to go right away an' tell Mrs. Blacke-McCormick, 'cause she'll be that tickled to hear of your luck that she'd ought to be give plenty of time to think up somethin' specially nasty to say before the two of you meet next time."

"Bravo!" shouted Mike. He tossed his flower-decked cap into the air, caught it deftly, then swung the Barney baby upon one shoulder and danced about to the music of his own voice.

"Good!" exclaimed Richard.

"Thank God!" said Mrs. Barney as she dried her hands preparatory to shaking mine in congratulation. "It's fierce to have to pack water for house-keeping."

The three older Barney children, infected by the general cheerfulness of their elders, began to caper

about Mike and his infantile partner, but Seton was silent. After a moment, the well-borer's wife said, slowly and sadly: "I suppose we'll soon be moving again; we always have to go away from a place just as I'm beginning to like the people real well."

Gibbons has demanded the privilege of renting the shack at Fleitmanhurst from month to month, as he is boring a well for a settler about a mile north of there, and other neighbors are considering having similar work done. It may be that he and his wife will be in this region throughout this winter. That possibility would not worry me were Seton talking of departing, but he says nothing of leaving us. Nor has any summons come from his mother, although it is a month since I sent her a letter of warning, which was, perhaps, so carefully phrased that she failed to read between its lines. This unprofitable effusion stated that this region is more rough than she perhaps realizes and that her son is forming undesirable friendships. To have made the statement stronger by saying that Seton is infatuated with a married woman would have given Mrs. Postley an erroneous impression of Evelyn Gibbons, who is as undesigning as a child, as well as of Seton's behavior, which has never been other than straightforward.

"Seton has even ceased to talk about his beloved

'snake room,' " I complained to Richard. "Probably he wouldn't take a rattler's pelt as a gift now, much less pay real money for one."

"Seton would pay a fair price for a rattler's pelt, even if he threw it away the next moment, because he's the sort to keep any agreement that he might make," replied Richard. "He's a boy—er—a man—of honor. You might have spared yourself the trouble of writing that diplomatic letter to his mother because she knows that 'apron strings' have gone out of fashion. You may be sure that she perfectly understands her son's disposition."

"Perhaps," shaking my head doubtfully, being possessed of the belief that no woman understands any man—even her own son. Then added hopefully: "If Seton has ever before fancied himself in love, he'll be the more likely to quickly recover from this attack."

"Tumbling in and out of love isn't a characteristic of the Postley family. Because Seton will be likely to go about the world a good bit, he may have several love affairs before he marries but had he met Mrs. Gibbons before her marriage, he'd never look at another woman. What I at first supposed was mere admiration for a pretty face proves to be a very deeply rooted affection."

This opinion of Richard's was depressing and, while wondering what could be done about Seton,

another week passed. A second week was half gone on the day that, starting tardily for Letter Box Grove, we reached there just as the mail stage was departing and the settlers dispersing. Among Seton's letters was one addressed in an unfamiliar chirography. This he read twice over, then said slowly: "It's from the Mater's trained nurse. She writes wholly on her own responsibility to warn me that operations for appendicitis sometimes prove—fatal."

"Most trained nurses are alarmists," I said quickly and mendaciously. "But, naturally, you will want to go to your mother. Percy Nelson shall drive you to Baldwin right away. There's plenty of time to catch the eastward bound night train."

"But he'll have to take the risk of securing a Pullman reservation and may have to sit up for several nights," objected Richard. "Twenty-four hours' delay won't make a material difference, or the nurse would have telegraphed. Percy shall drive to Baldwin this afternoon and secure a section for to-morrow evening."

"That's so," agreed Seton, so eagerly that I stared at him in amazement.

Evelyn Gibbons was not at Letter Box Grove that noon, but we had not expected to find her there, as the well-borer had told Mr. Barney he was going up-country to confer with an orchardist about a

contract and expected to take his young wife along. While Seldie and Seton walked a few yards in advance, Richard took the opportunity to remark: "That boy won't leave here without saying good-bye to Evelyn Gibbons, and, as she will not get back to Fleitmanhurst until late to-night, you need only keep an eye upon him between to-morrow's dawn and train time. This is your afternoon off duty." Richard smiled, but I sighed. The duties of a chaperone are at all times irksome, but never more so than when her charges are the young multi-millionaire son of a widowed gentlewoman and the unsophisticated wife of a middle-aged mechanic.

Nevertheless the afternoon might have progressed smoothly had it not been for Josie Skookem, who, shortly after luncheon, ambled into the yard on her favorite gray cayuse. She led a second pony laden with large baskets filled with wild berries. Although Collie continuously wagged his plummy tail, his noisy greeting greatly alarmed her. Finally, when in the exuberance of his youthful spirits, the dog leaped upon her back, caught the end of her brilliantly colored kerchief, and dragged it from her head, she became really nervous. A sharp word from Richard, however, promptly reduced Collie to order, and Josie, having tethered her ponies to a tree, came inside the shack. As she entered the library, Seton, who had been lounging upon a couch, sprang to his

feet and bowed ceremoniously. Not having acquired the frontiersman's offhand manner, he accords precisely the same courtesy to the red woman as he does to her white sister.

Josie, frankly amazed and tremendously flattered by Seton's manner, giggled and seated herself in a rocking chair which creaked beneath her weight. Presently a shaft of sunlight, striking athwart the boy's short-cropped blond head, turned its every hair to brightest gold. As though fascinated with this glorious halo, the squaw seated herself beside him on the couch and ran her slim brown fingers over his head. It is quite possible that she had never before seen a person so blond. Her naïvely expressed admiration for Seton was certainly refreshing.

After a few moments she indicated a desire to explore our shack and slowly examined its four rooms, its bath and its pantry. The simply framed pictures and the rows of books seemed greatly to interest her, the china and silver clearly were revelations in table equipment, and the rugs and draperies drew forth admiring exclamations in Chinook. Most of all was she taken with our New Zealand steamer rugs, which she plainly regarded as squaw blankets. So long did she hover over these wrappings and so frankly did she hint that she would gladly accept one of them, that I finally gave her to understand that the contents of this shack

belong to Richard, of whom she stands greatly in awe. Yet it was he who purchased a quantity of her late berries, and, despite her admiration for Seton and her expressions of friendship for me, she contrived to drive a very shrewd bargain.

"Seventy-five cents a gallon is an absurd price, Josie," remonstrated Richard. "Nobody around here will pay you so much."

Josie exhibited three "two-bit" pieces. "Well-man's woman just now give me these."

Seton picked up his cap and snake stick. "I'm off for a short stroll," he announced with a semblance of carelessness. Then he extended a hand to Josie. "Good-bye."

"He nice boy," remarked Josie, gazing intently after Seton as, followed by Collie, he hurried across the clearing bordering the orchard. Then she turned her dark eyes skyward: "I go now. Heap big storm he come," adding when she had mounted her cayuse, "I see nice boy 'gain some time, maybe?"

"You're not likely to," replied Richard dryly. "He don't belong here."

"No white mans belong Klickitat country," quickly retorted the squaw, "but they come—and stay."

"Josie's a born Socialist," observed Richard as we watched the squaw's brilliantly blanketed figure glinting amongst the trees of the wagon track,

"although she probably has never heard a lecture on Socialism and don't even know that there is such a cult."

"Of course Seton has gone to Fleitmanhurst," I said, for the nonce losing interest in Josie Skookem.

"Not a doubt of it," was the reply.

"I'm going there, too."

"Then you *will* make a fool of yourself," said Richard frankly.

"Seton said that he was going for a short stroll and nothing whatever about Fleitmanhurst." I was putting on my tweed topcoat and cap.

"Josie's storm will catch you," warned Richard as I passed through the door of the shack.

Mt. Hood was hidden behind a mass of black clouds which had gathered suddenly. In the east a dense, dark curtain hid the further landscape, blotting out its hills and blurring its forests. The five-times-married woman's woods were as quiet as a house above which Death hovers as I took the short cut through them. Not a bird chirped, not a pheasant fluttered, not a squirrel scampered, not a lizard rustled the dry leaves on the ground. Every flower hung its head; every tree drooped its branches. The forest, rarely silent, lay beneath that spell which seems to hold Nature before the breaking forth of a great storm that is to rage through the woods, terrorizing the timid wild creatures, prostrating

half-dead trees, forcing stately oaks and pines to bow humbly before its blasts. Long before I had struck the trail leading to Fleitmanhurst, the wind began to rise and great drops of rain fell upon my face. A chill, that was almost icy, came into the air, and in the depths of that primeval forest night seemed to be coming on apace. I listened anxiously for the sound of Collie's voice and peered into the gloom in the hope of catching a glimpse of his shaggy red-gold coat. If the boy and the dog had taken that trail they must have traveled fast. Perhaps they had gone in some other direction? Why could I not accept Seton's "going for a short stroll" literally? Why was I possessed with the idea that by hurrying to the Fleitmanhurst shack I might avert a tragedy? The well-borer was away from his home and no one else who was interested in his young wife was of a violent disposition. Reason suggested turning back. Intuition whispered, "Go on." The trail seemed endless. Each instant the wind rose higher, the big rain drops fell faster, the woods grew darker.

The Fleitmanhurst home plot lies in a hollow between three high hills, and to reach it the pedestrian travels a trail whose final lap is almost a perpendicular descent. Directly opposite, the county road, rough and narrow, runs three times across the face of the second steep hill and proceeds similarly across

the third elevation so that a person traveling this highway from either direction has a view of the shack for fully ten minutes before reaching its doorway. As I paused for breath at the top of the trail's steep descent, a horseman came into view on an opposite hill. The rain was beating full upon his face, which I could not see distinctly, but because he was proceeding slowly I felt sure that he was the well-borer returning from his long ride up-country. Nan, whom he had hired from Tom Nelson, was doubtless tired beyond the effort of breaking into one of her hysterical gallops, and her rider was now so close to a fire and dry clothing that a further drenching did not matter to him. From the top of the trail I could see the wide open rear door of the shack, and the sight of Collie, squatted just within its threshold, proved that I must be inside of the little home before the arrival of its master. Otherwise the well-borer might not believe that I had gone there with Seton. Would I be in time? I could hear the beat of Nan's hoofs as a fairly smooth bit of road inspired her to strike into her characteristic rapid gait, but the next twist of the way hid horse and rider from view just as I left the trail and dashed across the open to the shack. I gained it as a shout announced that the well-borer was clamoring for admittance at the front door. Collie sprang upon me as I entered the lean-to

and for the first time was roughly repelled. The look of hurt surprise in his brown eyes still is with me.

"Turn that inside out," I whispered, while handing my wet top-coat to Seton, "and wrap the cap inside of it." Without speaking to Evelyn Gibbons, standing wide-eyed and bewildered at the opposite side of the kitchen, I stepped into the front room and, pushing back the bolt of its door, admitted the master of the house. And lied: "We took refuge here from the storm. Your wife is kindly making us a cup of tea."

Mr. Gibbons grunted. Throughout that tea party he was unusually sullen, and Seton said scarcely a word. Its hostess and I kept up a disjointed conversation concerning Collie. Dogs are quite as safe a topic as is the weather and a decidedly more interesting one. Suddenly Collie gave vent to a short, glad bark and bounded through the open door of the lean-to.

Richard, garbed and laden with oilskins, was coming down the trail. "I thought you two weather-wiseless people would take refuge here from the storm," he said in his most genial accents.

"That thar squaw, Josie, told 'em it was a-goin' ter rain," growled Mr. Gibbons. "I met her a piece back."

"Did Josie Skookem tell the well-borer that Seton

was with me or did she mention Evelyn and Seton?" That thought tormented me during our homeward walk. Richard, contrary to custom, kept at the rear of the procession as the three of us took our way over the forest trails. I, following Seton, and, filled with an indefinable apprehension of evil to be guarded against, continually glanced backward.

CHAPTER XV

By nine o'clock that night the storm had spent its fury upon the earth and the wind had subsided. One by one the stars came out. Seton, having made all preparations for his journey of the morrow, went to bed. Soon afterward his example was followed by Richard, who first made sure of having plenty of fresh air by hooking back both entrance doors, as is his practice during other than severely cold weather. He laughs at the idea of barring the doors of an occupied house such as this one since any man of average strength could readily break into it. Nevertheless I invariably bolt the door of my own room. The noise necessarily made by any marauder who might try to force it would at least prove a warning in case Collie were absent on one of his prowling expeditions. Richard's second argument against barring the doors has heretofore been: "Never yet has anyone come here after dark, and it's most unlikely that anyone ever will come." The unexpected happened that night. While my candles still were burning, a man's voice, coming from the direction of the bar-gate, called "Charley! Charley!"

From the chamber beyond the living-room came the sound of two men breathing deeply and regularly, but my voice instantly awakened them. As they sat up in their beds, "Charley! Charley!" was repeated, this time directly outside the window of their room. Richard stepped to the front door and addressed the man whose tall figure could be dimly discerned close to the veranda: "Are you looking for someone?"

"I guess I lost my way, mister," replied the stranger, in low-pitched, musical tones.

"Who are you?"

"Skookem. There used to be a trail running through here."

"There still is a trail, but you can't use it now. This place is fenced. If you're going toward the Columbia, take that trail behind the storehouse," indicating the woods beyond the line fence. "It crosses de Petrio Canyon and leads straight to the river."

"Thank you, mister." The Indian half turned about. "Good-night."

"There's a lady," murmured a softly pitched feminine voice. A squaw mounted on a pony moved out of the shadows and closer to the door.

"What is your name?" This time Richard addressed the blanketed shape.

"Sally."

"Then, if you're the wife of Indian Jim, go straight back to Josie's shack. You'll find the two Jims there—waiting for you."

"How you know that?" demanded Skookem.

"Mrs. Greene—you know the wise white woman—heard from them this morning."

"I go!" exclaimed the squaw. Turning her cayuse she sped toward the wagon track and was soon swallowed by the blackness of the forest beyond the fencing.

"Sally stuck on Big Jim," laughed Skookem as he mounted his cayuse. "She all right now. In an hour she be with her boy at Josie's place. I no bother with her any more. Good-night."

"Skookem was so curious to know if that old trail were still open that he made an excuse to come here," laughed Richard. "There's no telling how he happened to pick up Sally, but they probably saw your light from the road across the south canyon and it guided them straight here. How silly of him to pretend he had missed the trail. In daylight or darkness an Indian doesn't lose his way."

Early the next morning the Oelsens, whose "eighty" adjoins our south line, came to tell us of Skookem's visit to their shack just before the storm of the previous afternoon. On that occasion the chief was alone and had assumed a dictatorial tone. He threatened to break down the boundary fence be-

tween the two properties if a gate were not made in it so that the trail crossing the lands might be used by his tribesmen. Finally he said: "You didn't buy this land from me."

"Sure, I didn't. I bought it from the government. And if you get fresh about it I'll fill you full of lead," replied Oelsen, whose expression and tones usually are as mild as a lamb's.

Mrs. Oelsen volunteered the information that Skookem is at present a grass widower, a condition which frequently overtakes him. Only a short time ago he had beaten his squaw because her boy papoose had died. This manner of expressing paternal bereavement so angered the mother of the dead baby that she promptly deserted the father. Whereupon the deserted Indian asked the county authorities to force her to return to his ranch, a domestic matter in which the officials declined to interfere. They also—untactfully—reminded him that the young squaw was but one of a number of spouses who had been unable to endure his society for long.

Skookem may have a rather high-minded mode of defining a wife's domestic status, but he certainly has an agreeable voice, polite manners, and a distinguished personality. Because he is an hereditary chieftain, the lady at the head of his menage enjoys a certain social prestige. According to the well-informed Mrs. Oelsen, the various ex-spouses of the

chieftain, believing that in union there is strength, are on the most cordial terms one with another. If it is indeed true that these ladies have reunions, to attend one of them would certainly be an interesting experience since these ex-wives doubtless freely express opinions of their common lord's eccentricities. Nevertheless these detached wives are not wholly emancipated. At busy seasons Skookem orders all of them back to his ranch to help with the work in progress there. This proves how vastly superior is his business acumen to that of the alimony-paying white chiefs of the marriage industry.

As soon as the Oelsens had departed, Seton took formal leave of Collie and Lila, who followed him to the bar-gate as though realizing that he was leaving for an indefinite time. While traveling the trail overlooking Fleitmanhurst's shack, we saw the well-borer lounging at its doorway. He kept his face averted from us, although he must have heard our voices and guessed our identity. When I, like Lot's wife, glanced backward from the apex of the opposite hill, Gibbons had turned his face. His sullen black eyes were fixed upon Seton.

Near the letter boxes we encountered Mr. Carpenter returning from an early morning errand at Baldwin. He handed me a letter which had reached the village the previous evening, and, thinking that it might be of importance, was intending to leave it

at Mira-Monte. As the letter was an urgent request from a magazine editor for additional photographs of the fruit-growing region, I at once decided to spend that night at Baldwin. By so doing I could see Seton board the eastbound train that evening and be with him every moment up to the time of his departure. The thought of knowing positively that he had started in safety would be a comforting one.

Seton was in no haste to reach Baldwin before train time. We loitered along the road, stopping in the late afternoon to eat luncheon at the spring near the bridge and neglecting the short cut across Josie's homestead property. But we paused long enough near it for Seton to take various kodak views of the abiding place of the first Mrs. Skookem.

If to Josie had been given the privilege of selecting her homestead she displayed small wisdom. What portion of it is not a wind-swept bluff overlooking Mullen Hill Road is on a sort of peninsula between de Petrio Canyon and the Big Klickitat, which there curves abruptly and is spanned by a wooden bridge at the point where the railway tracks are left behind and Mullen Hill begins. The shack is a collection of irregularly-sized sheds, presumably opening one into another, and doubtless added from time to time as the necessities of the family demanded. The central and larger section of the house supports its sole chimney, and is also distinguished

by an entrance door from which a trail leads straight to the fences separating the clearing from the county road. Near the south side of the shack is a covered well fed by an underground spring, and in the adjacent paddock browse many ponies. The possession of a large number of ponies is not an indication of enormous wealth, for it is a poor Indian who has not from fifteen to twenty of these animals. Nobody knows why Josie Skookem keeps so many cayuses. Certainly she does not have them for agricultural purposes as only a small portion of her homestead has been cleared; not a foot of it has been plowed. Also living on this ranch is a band of savage dogs, which snarl at every passing pedestrian and vehicle, but never jump the fences of their owner's domain. With the fierce eyes and wolfish face of the coyote, these mongrels have short hair of the dull black-brown shade of the singed sausage and an unsymmetrical shape. Despite this lack of pulchritude, Josie seems to prize them. They return her esteem by faithfully guarding her property. To get anywhere near to the shack or even to use a trail crossing the clearing, means to encounter a band of these snarling pets, whose barking always brings a squaw upon the scene. If of friendly disposition, the squaw will promptly quiet the dogs; if unfriendly, she will brandish a stick at the intruder. Such a demonstration is sufficient to cause

the average white woman to hurriedly retire. A man, of course, always holds to his course. To be driven off by an Indian woman would be to earn for him that term which every self-respecting settler regards as one of reproach—"squaw man."

These wolf-dogs vanish whenever Josie's homestead is temporarily deserted, but what then becomes of them is one of the mysteries which surround the habits of these aboriginals. The dogs simply disappear. We have frequently seen Josie when about to start upon or when returning from a journey, and although the procession invariably includes an ancient "hack" and innumerable pack ponies—heavily laden with clattering pots, pans and kettles—never is she attended by a canine pet.

Not until we had finished our luncheon at the spring did Seton refer even distantly to the event of the previous day. "We should have stopped at Fleitmanhurst for your tweed coat; you may need it to-morrow while on the river."

"The coat would still have been damp," I replied and began to talk animatedly of things and people in the east, inspired by dread of being entrusted with some message, which might not be a wise one, to deliver to the well-borer's young wife.

More rain fell that evening while we were having supper at Baldwin with the Tanners in their new home. It consists of two twelve by fourteen foot

wall tents, connecting at one end by a door and lighted by several landscape windows. It is set up close to the Columbia and in the centre of a garden enclosed with a picket fence, from whose gate a cinder path leads to a door opening into a living-room with a matting-covered floor, gunny sacking-lined walls, walnut furnishings and dotted Swiss window draperies. Behind this room is a parlor-bedroom done in red denim, willow furnished and heated by an air-tight stove, beside which lives a satin-coated Maltese.

Seated in that tent home, amidst warmth and comfort and the innumerable evidences of refinement, which the wife of the leading pioneer has collected about herself, it was difficult to realize that we were on the edge of civilization. On one side the Columbia, flowing past bleak bluffs; on the other a dense forest, the home of bear, coyote, and bobcat. But we knew that outside those canvas walls a fierce wind was battling with a heavy rain. The noise of these warring elements almost deadened the sound of a knock at the door of the tent.

"That's an Injun," remarked the white-haired old frontiersman, briskly rising from his chair near the table, at which we were playing cribbage, and opening the door. Big Jimmy stood without. Nodding gravely in response to our salutations: "Come in, Jimmy," "Good-evening, Jimmy," "How are you,

Jimmy?" the aborigine stepped into the room and seated himself on a proffered chair. He did not remove the broad-brimmed gray felt hat,—firmly secured by a red ribbon bow knotted under his brown chin,—from beneath which streamed long black locks loosened by the wind from the leather thong which customarily held them against the nape of his neck. A scarlet and yellow striped calico neckerchief contrasted vividly with his cheap, dark, worsted suit, and elaborately beaded moccasins extending midway to his knees. Indian Jimmy asked our host, who speaks Chinook fluently, how he should proceed to collect damages for a portion of fencing fired by a locomotive on the Goldendale railway track which passes Josie's ranch. After the necessary advice had been furnished, a silence ensued. Apparently the visitor had nothing further to say, yet he sat gazing straight at Seton.

"Is that all, Jimmy?" asked the old pioneer after a lapse of several moments. Time was flying and he was anxious to finish the game of cribbage before the eastbound train would arrive.

The Indian did not reply.

Another silence. The visitor again fixed his gaze upon Seton and perhaps would have addressed him directly had he been able to express himself fluently in our tongue. When the clock had ticked off another five minutes the aborigine arose, and, without

uttering another word, crossed the tent, opened its front door and plunged into the outer blackness.

"That Injun's got somethin' on his chest besides a burned strip o' fencin'," mused the old frontiersman. A shrill whistle sounded from a long distance. "That's the train from Goldendale." He glanced at the clock and addressed Seton: "Better be gettin' a move on to you, young feller; the eastbound train's due in five minutes, 'cause it connects with the one from up-country." He lighted the lantern which was to illumine our way to the railway station: "You can leave this here, goin' to the boat to-morrow morning," he said as he handed the light to me. Calling out a cheery "good-night" and "good-bye" he closed the door of the tent.

"Someone is riding close behind us," muttered Seton presently. "Hello, there!" he shouted.

There was no response but, by the soft padding of little unshod hoofs, we knew that an Indian, himself hidden by the darkness without the circle of our lantern's rays, was being guided by them.

The train lingered scarcely long enough at Baldwin for Seton to swing upon the rear platform of a Pullman and almost into the arms of its white-coated colored porter, who hurried him into the car as the engine bell clanged in response to the forward signal.

As the train moved slowly away, I turned and

looked straight into the sullen black eyes of Mr. Jack Gibbons. Behind him, so close that he could instantly have laid a sinewy brown hand upon his throat, crouched Big Jimmy, a murderous-looking sheath knife gripped between his teeth. A pace behind Jimmy, Josie Skookem held the bridles of two cayuses. Seton had been well guarded that stormy autumn night.

The well-borer gallantly escorted me to the Hotel Baldwin. On the way there he made one remark: "This here country ain't no place for no young dude." Fortunately I remembered Richard's oft-repeated remark: "If women would keep their mouths closed when they don't know precisely what to say they would keep out of trouble a great many times." Never before had I been so eager to avoid trouble.

The confusion caused by a dozen sheepherders loading their pack horses awakened me before dawn the morning after Seton's departure, but its sunrise was sufficient compensation for the loss of a few hours' sleep. While standing on the hotel veranda, a fiery glare in the east so startled me that I was on the point of shouting "Fire!" when I realized that the supposed conflagration was the sun appearing from behind the high bluffs on the Oregon side of the Columbia. Forgetting the dirt and disorder of the little frontier settlement, the swine and

fowl loafing about its narrow streets, the sordid existence of its citizens—all save the miracle of the dawn—I reveled in the glory of it until the door behind me was flung open and the peace of the hour dispelled by the rough boots and the rougher voices of the “regular boarders” at the hostelry. The spell cast upon me by the breaking of the day was shattered for, by the time the boarders had gone away, the sun had climbed high enough to disclose the rudely constructed shacks and discolored, grimy tents lining the muddy, unkempt thoroughfare. Suddenly conscious of the wintry chill in the air, I went indoors.

The smoky atmosphere of the hotel office proclaimed that in its sheet iron stove a newly lighted fire was struggling for existence. This heater was expected to supply warmth to that general lounging place as well as to the adjoining dining-room, where I seated myself at table opposite to a smooth-faced young man wearing a cheap, neat suit, a flannel shirt and mountain boots, yet looking every inch a tender-foot. While I was mentally trying to decide what might be his occupation, a waitress, placing a laden tray at his elbow, apologized: “Sorry to keep you waiting so long, mister, but our cook left last night.”

“So soon as I’ve finished breakfast I’ll apply for the job,” promptly replied the guest.

"Good!" exclaimed the girl. "That there's the kitchen," pointing to a swinging door.

When the waitress had gone, I remarked: "You're not a professional cook."

"No, but I guess I'll do well enough for this sort of an hotel."

"Broke?"

"Nearly," cheerfully. "In a new country a man must take whatever work he can get."

"That's right, young feller," said the well-borer, who had lounged into the dining-room in time to overhear our conversation. "But this here's a rough country an' we don't want no men in it what thinks they're better'n us." Without awaiting a reply he passed on.

Not until Mr. Gibbons had seated himself at a distant table did the tenderfoot mutter: "A chap with a grouch now and an ugly customer at any time. He'd be as bad an enemy as an Indian—judging by what I've heard about them."

"Scarcely so firm a friend as an Indian," I replied, remembering how Seton had been guarded by Josie and Jimmy during the previous evening.

Two days later Richard received a letter from Seton, written on the train during the night following his departure from Baldwin. He said: "I'm going home because a son's place is beside his ill mother, but I've left my heart in the shack at Fleit-

manhurst. Evelyn doesn't know that and I don't know that she cares for me—because she's good and innocent and pure-minded. While Gibbons remains in Klickitat I shall never return there."

"You had all that worry for nothing," remarked Richard, as he destroyed the letter—for one never knows.

"Nobody could have guessed that Seton's mother would develop an appendix or that her trained nurse would be inspired to write so feelingly. I doubt if any other circumstance could have lured Seton away from here."

"'All's well that ends well,'" quoted Richard.

"Has this affair ended? I wonder."

CHAPTER XVI

MID-WINTER and as yet no snow. I look every day at the unlovely blackened stumps left by the autumn burnings, and they fill my soul with joy. As soon as these stumps have been blown out and the soil grubbed, that new strip will be ready for the plowman; after he is through with his work, the little peach trees heeled down months ago, will be planted. The sum which is to pay for this additional work came not miraculously, but from the sale of a diamond ring heirloom. Had I a peck of such baubles, they would be sold cheerfully to further the improvements upon this Klickitat Eden. Land hereabout steadily rises in value because every foot of property within a ten mile radius of Baldwin has been taken up. As soon as a homesteader has lived the allotted time, and made the specified improvements upon his holding, he can usually sell his claim for fifty to seventy dollars per acre to persons financially able to immediately begin development work. Yet not all of them—even after five years of toil and contending with debt—are eager to get away. "I don't want the childer to have to go away from home

to work when they've growed up. An' if the apple trees is bearing by that time—an' please God, they will be—they won't have to go," Mr. Barney said to me not long ago while Richard was playing host to Mr. Blacke-McCormick, who had come here ostensibly to see the pump-house recently erected over the well, but actually to invite my eligible bachelor brother to visit the colonial replica in logs. Mr. Blacke-McCormick emphasized his invitation with, "and, Mr. Van Cortlandt, my wife said to tell you that you'll be treated as a gentleman." Richard is now wondering whether Mrs. Blacke-McCormick believes that such treatment will be a novel experience for him.

Often toward sunset, a patch of vivid green, yellow, blue or red glimpsing among the trees along the wagon track, announces the coming of an Indian. Nearly always the visitor proves to be Josie, at times accompanied by little Jim, and she usually brings a gift in the shape of a fish, a bird or a fancy basket. Never as yet have I given her a present of value and because most squaws beg systematically and persistently, Josie's professed affection must be genuine. She does not ask for presents although loud in her expressions of admiration and lingering in her survey of the various articles which she specially fancies. Her most recent offering was a pair of ela-

borately-beaded mocassins and she was frankly scandalized because my feet refused to go into them. Indeed, those extremities seem of abnormal proportions as compared with Josie's feet which are short, arched of instep, and very slender despite her one hundred and fifty pounds of flesh and bone.

"You all same sister," said Josie during one of these visits, then lapsed into silence as she often does. Occasionally I glanced from my task of dressing dolls for the Barney's little daughters, to admire my guest's idle hands which looked like models in bronze as they lay on her blue calico lap. Her slim, tapering fingers have perfectly shaped, well-cared for nails and her almost white palms are not rough as, indeed, they should not be since she does work no harder than bead-embroidery and basket-weaving. Her housekeeping is accomplished by an elderly sister, who looks a hundred years old and probably is less than fifty. That day, Josie, according to habit, was wandering about the living-room and the library, peering at the books—whose titles she cannot read—and fingering articles on the shelves. Suddenly she uttered a low cry of delight. She had come upon Seton's photograph. "He no come back—no more," she said. It was a statement, not a question.

"Some day—perhaps."

"Not now!" exclaimed the squaw earnestly.

"Some day—twelve moons, may be. Josie and Big Jimmy no want him to come back *now!*"

"Why?"

"Well-man, he no good!" she burst forth, her dark eyes flashing with hatred. "He curse my lil' girl an' hit her 'cause she get in he way Baldwin store. Boy," touching Seton's photograph, "he speak good to her—give her this." She fished from some mysterious pocket under her dress the mate to my silver belt; one of the pair that Mrs. Blacke-McCormick had seen Seton buy and had told the gossips that he had given to Evelyn Gibbons. "He all same my lil' girl's brother now."

"Was that the reason you and Big Jimmy followed him to the cars when he left here?" I asked.

"We watch well-man all that day," admitted Josie, "'cause well-man follow boy—with knife. But," triumphantly, "Jimmy have big knife, too." Then she added quickly: "You no tell white mens Jimmy have knife."

I promised. Sure that I would keep my word, Josie said that she must go, and, with a final glance at Seton's pictured face, picked up her baskets. She scarcely spoke as we walked to the bar-gate. There she mounted her cayuse and moved away down the trail. At its first bend she turned on her blanket saddle and waved a small brown hand. The sun was be-

ginning to drop below the western hills, and its glow reddened the horizon like a conflagration, as the squaw's brightly garbed figure cut sharply into the darkness of the forest.

Existence here is so peaceful, and, since Seton's safe departure, so care-free that I frequently find myself wishing that certain women who send me long accounts of rebuffs, disappointments and office "knifings" would come here for an indefinite rest from journalistic worries. Yet even the most dissatisfied of these metropolitan strugglers for a livelihood would soon become bored with such tame diversions as sunsets, brush fires and afternoon tea with squaws. As Richard rarely calls upon a neighbor, we have few visitors. Aside from Josie, Little Jim and the Tan-ners, the persons who occasionally happen in are either white men wearing blue overalls, tall boots and collarless shirts or Indians wearing ankle-high mocassins, calico sashes and absurdly shaped felt hats tied beneath the chin with gaudy ribbons. Daily I encounter at Letter Box Grove an assemblage of settlers who backbite any absent neighbors as cheerfully as do the countryside gossips or the club women of the effete east. Seldie says that most of these women fall upon my character and rend it to shreds as soon as my back is turned upon them. As the men labor under the erroneous impression that at this

ranch is "a barrel of money," from which it may be possible to borrow, they are cringingly polite to my face. If only I possessed that imaginary money keg, this entire quarter section of Mira-Monte would shortly be the wonder of the county.

CHAPTER XVII

RETURNING to Baldwin shortly before Christmas from a day's shopping at The Dalles, I left the train overladen with bundles, boxes and a second-hand shot-gun. Everybody in sight was too busy to relieve me of any portion of my burden, so I struggled with it over the miry trail to the post-office in the hope of encountering someone about to start up Mullen hill in a vehicle of some sort. At the post-office I found Mr. Carpenter and his antiquated sorrel on the point of leaving for home, but the wagon was so heavily laden that to take a passenger was out of the question. However, the settler agreed to transport my luggage, and, as the daylight would last for several hours longer, I decided to walk, confidently expecting to reach Mira-Monte some time in advance of the sorrel and his humane driver. Carpenter had scarcely gone when Satan appeared to me in the guise of Mr. John Tanner, who said that he was going the next morning to his up-country store, and would drive me as far as Letter Box Grove. The prospect of passing that night at Baldwin and driving next day to within a mile of home was more

alluring than that of trudging six miles over a rough road, and the possibility of becoming over-fatigued. Yet I would not have changed my plans had I not encountered Gibbons and asked him to tell Richard not to expect me that night.

The sun was scarcely an hour high the following morning when we drove away from Baldwin. The ground was hard with frost, the air sharp and the horses spirited. After some gentle discipline from their driver, however, and a mile of up-hill going, the brown cayuses settled into a steady trot that took us rapidly over the oldest road in Klickitat county. Few of the homesteads to be seen from this highway are of the shack type and some of them are almost pretentious. Nearly all of the houses are painted, many of them have verandas and bow windows, and several are of attractive architecture. But in every instance the land immediately surrounding the homestead has been absolutely denuded of trees and shrubbery. Usually all manner of domestic and farm machinery litters that area and frequently a family washing dries within full view of the whoever travels the highway.

But for the smoke issuing from the chimney of one rather large house whose blindless, undraped windows looked like lidless eyes, one might have assumed the place to be unoccupied. "Has the family recently moved in?" I enquired.

"Moved in five years ago," replied Mr. Tanner, "but they ain't found time to fix up."

"Busy developing the land, perhaps," I ventured, although seeing neither orchards nor fields.

"Busy doin' nothin'. Ten year from now if them folks lives on that ranch, it won't look one mite different than it does to-day. They're jest plum' shif'less!"

Shortly before noon we reached the up-country store, a replica of the one originally built by the Tanners at Baldwin, even to the huge sheet-iron stove, which heats the lower floor, where we found several masculine homesteaders lounging and exchanging neighborhood news. Edith Tanner was briskly scolding a clerk of almost twice her own age. This nervous, dapper-looking country beau who takes himself seriously and the orders of his young chief meekly, is certain to become more of a favorite with the women of that region than is the youngest Miss Tanner. She rarely utters a word that has not to do with business. Plenty of work was to be done that day as a heterogeneous stock of goods had just arrived and must be put in place. Mr. Tanner experienced some difficulty in locating various commodities, which several customers were asking for, and inquiries as to their whereabouts plunged the dapper clerk into a state of apparent imbecility, though he had been working for a fortnight under the direction

of the capable young manageress. That self-possessed person, on the contrary, clearly remembered where every article was to be found, and gave instructions about it without even turning her head or raising her eyes.

By degrees the neighboring settlers completed their trading and took their departure. As the last one of them was making his rather long-drawn-out adieu, a freight driver, whom we had passed on the road that morning, and who had left Baldwin soon after midnight, tied his team to a hitching post before the store. It was then about two o'clock and Mr. Tanner, his youngest daughter, the teamster and I partook of a luncheon sent over in large baskets from a neighboring house. The collation consisted of half a roasted chicken, baked custards, macaroni, canned tomatoes and buttered, raised biscuit. This food was laid out on a counter and we four sat on boxes drawn about it.

The dapper clerk lunched at the boarding-house, and returned to the store in time to effusively greet three women who alighted from the backs of as many cayuses and came running in, flushed, laughing, and shaking from their garments the snow which had been falling heavily for the past few moments. These representatives of local society made themselves thoroughly at home about the big stove and commented audibly and frankly about the size and the contents of

the store, as though they were inspecting it for the first time. Without casting a glance toward these women, although they are of the class with which she will mingle while residing in that neighborhood, Edith Tanner serenely finished her luncheon, put away her ledgers, locked her safe, wrapped her head in a worsted "cloud" and her trim little figure in an ulster, gave the clerk some final directions, and stepped into the hack. She was returning to Baldwin with her father for the purpose of inspecting the samples of some drummers who were then at the village on the Columbia's bank, but were unwilling to go further up-country on the mere chance of securing orders.

On this occasion Mr. Tanner chose a road which took us past the site of the burned saw-mill, loafing place for the neighborhood cattle, and within sight of Mr. Montmorenci Jones' collection of red buildings. The snow made the going so difficult that darkness was nearly upon us before we reached Letter Box Grove where I bade my hosts good-bye and picked up the shortest trail for Mira-Monte. At the gate Collie expressed his welcome with an enthusiasm which sent my parcels flying to the snow-covered ground; then he waltzed and cavorted beside me to the back door of the shack which was unlocked, although Richard was nowhere about. Lila was curled on a cushion in the dining-room, and, because she merely opened her eyes and surveyed Collie and I

patronizingly as we entered the room, I knew that during my brief absence the freedom of the shack had been bestowed upon her.

Richard had been superintending some slashing which Mr. Barney and Mike are doing on the south slope of the home hill, and which he means to plant next spring with grapes—a purely personal experiment—but Collie's vociferous greeting had notified him of some person's arrival. It transpired that Gibbons had not bothered to transmit my message about spending the previous night with the Tanners, and that Mr. Carpenter, upon reaching Mira-Monte had expressed wonder at my non-arrival. He and Richard wisely arrived at the conclusion that I had decided not to attempt so long a walk at so late an hour.

CHAPTER XVIII

A WOLF has been howling close to our door. He was there solely because of the procrastinating nature of Mr. Sidney Talman. From Mrs. Greene and Percy Nelson, both of whom claim close friendship with the "gentleman homesteader," we had heard much of the wealth and the "sporty" ways of the young man. Consequently, one morning we were surprised at being accosted by him while at the letter-boxes. He solicited patronage for an express and livery business in which he had just embarked, stating that he was prepared to transport freight with "despatch and at reasonable rates." Thanks be, that I had nothing to do with sending him his first and last order from Mira-Monte. Richard committed that piece of folly, impelled thereto by a worthless theory that every member of the sterner sex has some good in him. He gravely informed me that as Talman apparently was ambitious to behave like a regular man he should be encouraged. Alas! he insisted upon being the first encourager. With the admirable forehandedness that is one of his distinguishing traits, Richard had ordered our winter sup-

ply of groceries and kerosene during September. These supplies had been shipped by the city wholesale house, of which we are promptly paying, and, therefore, valued patrons, and had remained unclaimed at Baldwin because of the failure of the railway's freight agent to notify us of their arrival. Having finally located them, we commissioned Talman to bring them to us, and, because of his slogan, "Despatch and reasonable rates," expected him to make good within a week.

Several weeks passed. November slipped into December and Richard muttered maledictions. We were nearly out of sugar and could see the bottom of the coffee can. A courteously phrased note did not extract any reply from the proprietor of the livery and express business, and another week passed. We ceased to drink coffee and Richard, pouring molasses upon his breakfast cereals, muttered further maledictions. He also sent a note of a tenor likely to bring Mr. Talman to the ranch with a rifle instead of the groceries. That afternoon snow began to fall and within forty-eight hours there was four feet of it on the level. The third day dawned, bringing with it more snow. That noon we learned from the mail carrier that Mullen Hill road had become all but impassable for heavily loaded wagons, and was hourly becoming worse. We wondered if we should be forced to close the shack, and, followed by Lila and

Collie, walk to Baldwin and board there until we could find some means of personally conducting our supplies to their ultimate destination. Happily we were not for long forced to entertain this gloomy prospect. Late that afternoon the cheerful jingling of bells heralded visitors, and ten minutes later the red-tasseled heads of Francis Rawle's four black horses appeared at the bar-gate. They drew the freighter's heaviest wagon. Beside it trudged Rawle and a sixteen-year-old boy, both looking, in their fur chaps and caps, like overgrown coyotes walking on their hind legs. The previous morning Talman had despatched the boy with two horses and a light wagon to deliver two consignments of groceries and kerosene in this region. Half way up Mullen Hill the vehicle had stuck in the snow, and, unable to free it unaided, the boy had unhooked the horses and taken them to the ranch of Mr. Rawle, who, fortunately, happened to be at home that day. Together they returned with extra horses to the stalled wagon, but by the time they had freed it the sun had set. Next morning the man and boy, with four horses, managed to deliver some long-delayed supplies at a ranch seven miles further up-country, and on their return trip stopped here. The wage of Mr. Rawle and his horses added to the extra time of the boy and his board for two days at the freighter's home, amounted to double the price paid for the delivery of the supplies and

may or may not be a lesson to the manager of the livery and express business who had had eight weeks of clear weather, after receiving our order, to attend to the matter. Mr. Rawle had news to tell of Big Jimmy, whom everyone hereabout knows and likes: "Jimmy's the first Injun ever I seen deliberately goin' round an' lookin' for work so as to support his wife the same as a decent white man would do. He jus' kep' on askin' for a job at the freight yard until now they've taken him on along with the Hindoo gang, an' he's keepin' time as reg'lar as any of them turbaned heathen. Him an' Sally's got a tent close to the river——neighbors to the Tanners——an' there they're livin' as decent as any white folks."

"No wonder Sally carried on like she was crazy that day she come back to Baldwin las' fall an' couldn't find out where Jimmy had a-went," observed the boy. "She knew she'd married a white Injun."

Mrs. Blacke-McCormick comes regularly to Letter Box Grove these winter days, and, like most of the neighboring women, deliberately cuts Evelyn Gibbons. The social leader and her satellites form a group on one side of the main road, while an opposite faction, composed of Mrs. Greene and myself, remain on the other side of it. Mrs. Blacke-McCormick considers the well-borer "no gentleman," and snubs him elaborately whenever he meets the mail carrier. That happens frequently of late, as the machine is not

working steadily. Since the beginning of cold weather, Gibbons, who is thin-blooded and continually complaining of chilliness, enthusiastically seconds my efforts to keep up a bonfire while awaiting the stage. It must be admitted that he displays infinite patience when coaxing a match to ignite with damp twigs and pine cones. These kindling materials are collected chiefly by myself. A fear of getting frost-bitten feet is an ever-present one and I cheerfully give my companion stoker all possible aid, the while endeavoring to entertain him with enlivening conversation. To everybody's surprise, he recently laughed heartily at the recital of some time-honored joke which chanced to be new to him. This hilarity drew from Mrs. Blacke-McCormick the observation that two such illiterate persons as "that borer of wells" and "that squatter on ranches" would naturally be congenial. This sarcasm is a bit hard on Richard, who not only lives under the same roof with one of the illiterates, but acknowledges kinship to her. The gathering at the letter-boxes the day before Christmas was divided into two sections. Half of the people who awaited the carrier walked briskly up and down the road to keep from freezing, while the other half hovered over my bonfire, which burned so reluctantly that Mrs. Greene suggested having an orchestra at the grove that our circulation might be quickened by our dancing.

"I'm sure you're a lovely dancer, Mrs. Greene," said Evelyn Gibbons.

"No doubt you also dance like a fairy. If the Letter Box Grove set ever gives a party here, you'll be its belle." Richard spoke jocosely to Evelyn and was instantly sorry, for Gibbons, scowling darkly, turned aside, muttering curses.

As we were walking homeward after the delivery of the mail, the well-borer's wife volunteered the information that the day was the twentieth anniversary of her birth. I had thought her younger and, looking at at her dewy eyes, soft cheeks and tender throat, wondered how she would appear after another twenty years and whether, by that time, she would have bitterly regretted her youthful marriage.

Since the night of Seton's departure from Baldwin, Gibbons has never mentioned his name in my hearing. The other neighbors have often done so—always in connection with Evelyn's—but they are careful not to do it when the well-borer is present. Not the least advantage of a reputation for having an ugly temper, is that of being saved the annoyance of frank speech from one's associates. None of these homesteaders care to incur the wrath of pretty Evelyn's black-browed, sullen husband.

Christmas morning we waded to the letter-boxes through deep snow. The weather had moderated and the bright sunshine lured us out of doors partly for

the sake of inhaling fresh, pure air, but principally because of a desire for human companionship on a day associated with merrymaking and feasting—when one is among kindred souls and in some place where it is possible to procure feasting materials.

While passing Fleitmanhurst, Evelyn Gibbons joined us. She explained that she was going to Letter Box Grove to see what other people might receive from absent friends; not because she expected to be remembered. "My step-father is like my husband. They don't believe in celebrating Christmas. It's years and years—ever since my mother died—since I've had any fun on that day." Her tones were the cheerful ones that she customarily employs when speaking of the diversions which she would naturally enjoy and is denied.

The mail carrier was unusually tardy and in an unusual hurry. He was hurried because he had promised to take his "lady friend" to a dance eight miles east of Baldwin, and she insisted upon making an early start. Without tarrying to separate the various packets of mail, he dumped the entire collection on to the snow and drove off, leaving the distribution to Richard, who divided our share into two bundles, one of which he entrusted to me. The well-borer and his wife walked with us as far as Fleitmanhurst, but at the point where our ways parted, a flat little packet, slipping from my bundle of mail, fell upon the

snow. It was addressed to Mrs. Evelyn Gibbons, and she, uttering an exclamation of surprised delight, sprang to its rescue. But her husband was quicker. Swiftly stripping off the wrappings, he revealed an illustrated calendar with Seton Postley's card attached. To an accompaniment of oaths, Gibbons tore the little volume apart and flung it into the canyon with a force that sent the separated pages fluttering like brightly colored birds amongst the tree branches. "That's what I'll do with that thar young dude—tear him to bits! To Hell with his poetry talk and his French lingo!" he exclaimed. Then he strode homeward, slowly followed by his young wife.

bons privately," confessed Richard, "for I was sure

"I had intended handing that packet to Mrs. Gib—that Seton was sending merely a little remembrance at this season, as he quite properly could do. After all," he continued, "perhaps Gibbons is in the right—in his uncouth way—not to want his wife's head filled with ideas not in keeping with her education and environment. You're partly to blame," he went on, "for giving her those fool magazines devoted to dress and the doings of fashionable women."

"Her first ideas about society and fashionable pursuits were received from Seton. That's the only sort of life he knew anything about before coming here and, naturally—just at first—he talked about that life to her. She's as pretty as any *débutante* ever

brought out in the east," I continued. "After a few months among well-bred people she'd appear as well as any of them."

"She's a well-borer's wife," retorted Richard coldly. "Seton would best not forget that fact."

"One thing Seton has not forgotten," I remarked after glancing through one of my letters, "is his promise to get me a right-of-way to the county road. He's persuaded his mother to buy the Loring's' ranch. They couldn't resist an offer of seventy dollars an acre for it."

I looked at the little apple trees pushing their tops clear of the snow blanketing the orchard, at the towering pump-house above the spring well, at the course which my legal road through the Loring place would take, and told myself that the "break away" from New York four years "come next March," as Seldie would have phrased it, had been only for good.

Shortly after luncheon on the last day of the year, a knock at the front door announced a visitor, and immediately afterward Josie Skookem stepped into the living-room, crossed to the stove and crouched beside it. While getting warm, she regarded me keenly. Finally, taking both hands in hers, she said: "You no have tom-tom to hit. You go big medicine man—to-morrow—early——" She turned half round and glanced through a window at a lowering sky—"for come heap big snow."

"But I'm much better than I was last winter, Josie."

The squaw persisted: "You heap sick—all inside. Go to-morrow when sun he get up or you no get 'way ever. You die up here in woods."

"Nonsense!"

The Indian woman shook her head stubbornly. "You all same Josie sister. Josie no want you die. You heap sick. Go to-morrow see big medicine man."

Again she examined my fingernails, shook her head gravely, then drew her blanket about her and said "good-bye." From the doorway she pointed to a mass of black clouds gathering in the west and repeated: "Go to-morrow—soon sun get up."

"Josie knows what she's talking about," said Richard when the squaw's words were repeated to him. "Better take her advice and some of mine with it. Go to Spokane and into a hospital. To become really ill while you're a hundred miles from a first-class doctor would be to take the risk of not living to see your orchard reach a crop-bearing condition."

Long before dawn the next morning I was dressed and had breakfasted. So soon as there was enough light to see the fences and to avoid being scratched by their barbs, I struck the trail leading to Mullen Hill, Baldwin and the "heap big medicine man." Although it was the idle season of the year during which the settlers might reasonably be visiting one another

or going into the village, I met only three persons on the road. One of them was a German who told me his complicated name and assured me that it was easy to remember. It seemed to me to be so easy to forget that I knew I should have to minutely describe its owner to a man at Baldwin whom I was charged to seek out and then instruct him to telephone to a given point up-country in order to head off—by telephone—the brothers of the German who would be driving that afternoon to Baldwin to meet the later train, by which he had originally planned to arrive. As I was anxious to catch an east-bound train, I mentally put my curse upon the Hun for infringing upon my time, and hastened onward. On the portion of fenced-in road near the village I encountered two bareheaded Indian girls astride of gaily blanketed cayuses. At my approach one of the girls politely dropped behind the other, that there might be plenty of space on the road. Then both girls bowed graciously and said "Good-morning." As they were passing, the leading girl, turning on her blanket saddle, asked: "Where you come from?"

"Down that hill," pointing backward.

"What shack?"

"Mira-Monte."

"Uh!" showing two rows of white, even teeth. "I come there some time."

"Please do," I replied, and meant it. With an-

other exchange of smiles, we parted, they going further into the wilderness to a shelter warmed by a bonfire on a floor of earth and a fare of dried fish and corn; I toward civilization and its luxuries.

The citizen to whom the German's message had to be delivered was hard to find and because of this delay I missed the eastward bound train and was forced to spend the night at Baldwin. While in the Hotel Baldwin's office, its landlady introduced to me a tall man wearing a horizontally striped black and white sweater that made him look like a zebra standing on two black legs. As she led the way upstairs, she apologized: "That gentleman I just introduced you to has your usual room. He's awful rich and I dassent put him out of it."

What the landlady put me into was an eight-foot, square cell with one tiny window, whose ill-fitting sash rattled noisily under the assault of every gust of wind. The pine floor, ceiling and walls were painted a shade of green brilliant enough to have cheered the most homesick of Erin's sons. The temperature of this cell chilled my bones to their marrow, while my hostess was continuing her eulogy of the gentleman who had impressed me as convalescing from a prolonged carouse. Above the first floor of that hotel there was not a vestige of heat nor indications of any means of providing it. I went to bed and for a while

shivered between sheets of icy temperature while trying to read by the light of a lamp of feeble purpose. Finally, made desperate by discomfort, I put on all of my clothes, including sweater and topcoat, and, turning my face to the green wall, wooed sleep despite the sounds of music, laughter and shuffling of feet coming from the room below. Nevertheless, my curse was not put upon the revelers, for deprived of the nightly dances at the Hotel Baldwin the younger citizens of that hamlet would pass a forlorn winter. As the hotel is the resort of all the men of the region, there is no lack of partners for the village girls. There, too, the legally detached occasionally collide, as they glide with other partners, among the dancers.

When a cock's crow announced dawn, I knew that the household would soon be astir, and, despite the darkness still prevailing, slipped out of bed and into my overshoes, the only portion of my wardrobe not worn during the night. I was bent upon getting warm beside the stove in the kitchen whether the sovereign of that domain were cordial or otherwise. To my surprise a fire was burning briskly in the dining-room heater. Close to it sat a fat shoe drummer, and a lean representative of the ready-made cloak and suit industry. These pilgrims greeted me effusively, offered to share the early breakfast, which they had just bespoken and confessed that, wrapped

in quilts, they had passed the hours between the close of the dance and the dawn of the day on the floor of the refectory.

"Come unto me, my Indian maid!" cried the fat drummer, as Sally, carrying a heavily laden tray, entered the dining-room. The squaw did not vouchsafe a glance in his direction, but attended to her duties mechanically, moving quickly, albeit heavily and awkwardly, in her factory-made shoes. Every portion of her aboriginal garb had been discarded for the raiment of civilization. She looked really ludicrous in a sweat-shop tailored skirt of evil cut and a lingerie blouse whose coarse embroidery and lace revealed the dusky pelt of her neck and arms, and was completely satisfied with her altered appearance.

"Better not get too fresh with that waitress. She's a respectable married woman and a perfect lady. If you go too far she'll slug you with her tray," warned a middle-aged patron whom I recognized as the man from The Dalles who had kodaked the Letter Box Grove assemblage one summer morning several years before. He was seated at a table with two men of subdued aspect, and a scrawny, diamond-bedecked woman of querulous expression and conversation. The united efforts of her three companions were insufficient to pacify this fretful female. She loudly declared that no self-respecting pig would eat the

food that Sally had set before her, nor remain in a dining-room which she knew had not been scrubbed within a decade. The manner of The Dalles delegate was so exceedingly propitiatory that we were greatly surprised to hear him say, after the lady had left the room, that he never had seen her before. He had talked kindly to her because he had "felt so darned sorry for them two fellers who have to have her snarlin' 'round all the while."

As man is a creature to be avoided before he has breakfasted, and, if encountered, to be treated with gentleness, forbearance and infinite tact, I was vastly amazed, as well as amused, at the behavior of these three frontiersmen, and wondered if other men would act similarly were their womankind to behave so demoniacally as did the discontented female patron at that village hostelry.

In the hotel's office where Mr. Tanner had been awaiting me, one of the group of men clustered about the stove, rose and bowed so ceremoniously that his football suite of hair nearly swept the floor.

"How do you happen to know D. T.?" demanded the white-haired pioneer in scandalized tones, as we left the hotel.

"Who is D. T.?"

"Why, that black an' white striped feller who was a-settin' by the stove."

"He must be the gentleman whom the landlady in-

troduced last evening, but the office was so dark that I didn't see his face distinctly. And I don't know his name."

"Nor nobody else don't round here. They jest call him D. T. He's a city chap whose folks has sent him up here where they ain't no liquor sold, to sober up. He gets full reg'lar—every night. Because o' this bein' a prohibition town the fellers that drinks at all, drinks their whiskey by the quart instead of by the finger's depth—the reasonable way."

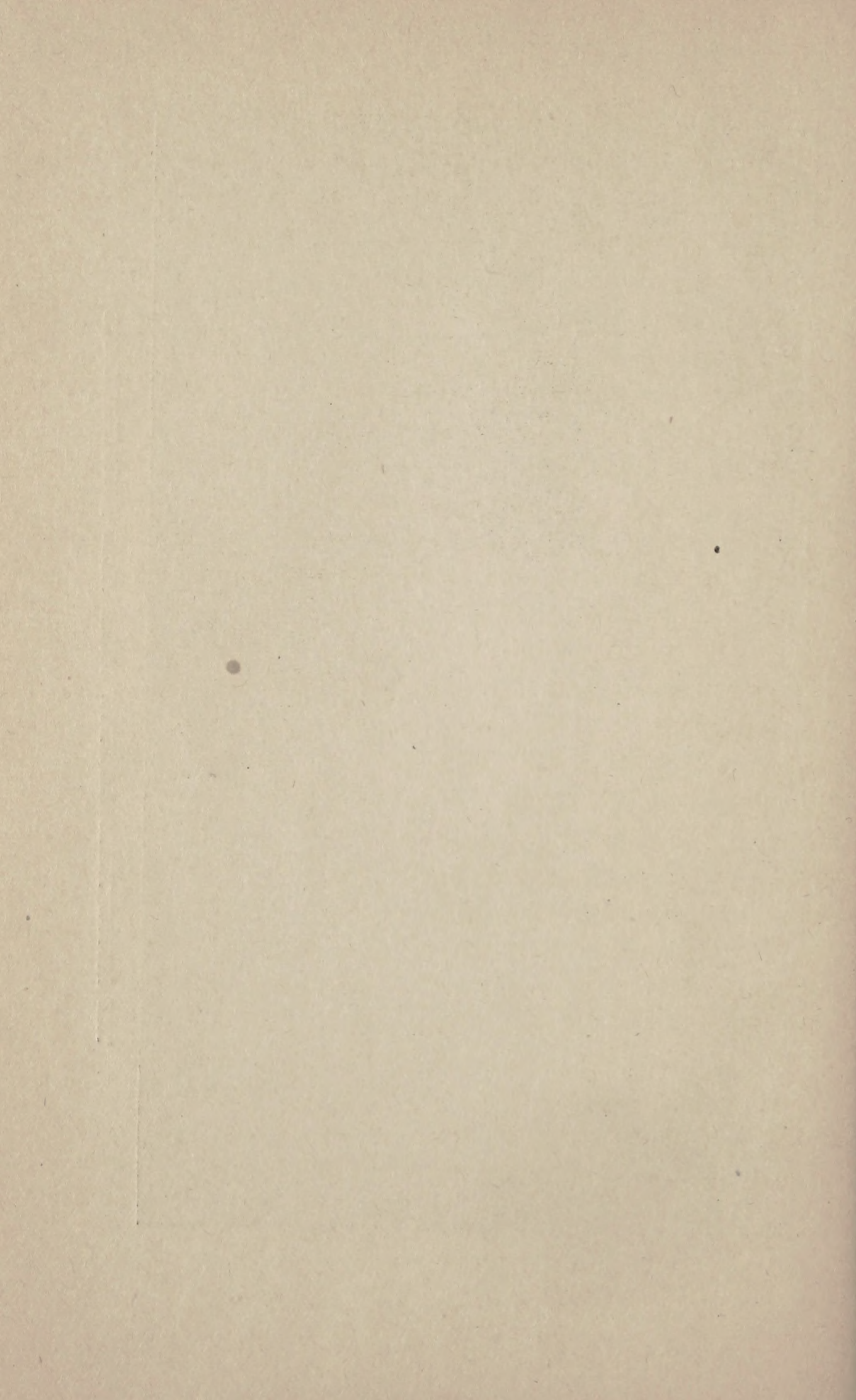
"System all run down," announced the "heap big medicine man" at Spokane, "but a fortnight in the hospital will work wonders. After that a tonic should complete the cure."

During my enforced absence from Klickitat came several letters from Mrs. Gibbons, and the day before my departure from the hospital came one from Richard, saying that the well-borer was considering the acceptance of an offer to buy his outfit, in which event he intended to settle upon a quarter section. A relinquishment, fifty miles up-country, was on the market, and Richard had agreed to go with Gibbons to inspect this property on condition that during their absence Mrs. Gibbons would live in our shack, in order to feed Collie and Lila, and have the rooms heated against my expected arrival there.

Reaching Baldwin after noon of the following day, I found Mr. Carpenter, as once before, at the post-



THE LITTLE TREES ARE NOW MORE THAN FOUR YEARS OLD



office, and, in front of its door, the antiquated sorrel attached to a wagon already so heavily laden that I hesitated to even add my small suitcase to the burden. To take a passenger was obviously out of the question. So I started to walk slowly home, confidently expecting to reach there soon after the arrival of the Carpenter equipage. A recent Chinook wind had melted the snow, and the air was so mild that my topcoat soon became burdensome. Its open fronts revealed the silver belt—much-prized gift of Seton Postley—and its glitter probably attracted the attention of two Italians—both strangers at Baldwin—for their persistent staring was commented upon by Mr. Tanner, when we met near his former store. "You won't have any difficulty in keeping up with Carpenter," he said, "because the goin's so hard for horses since the last thaw. Mebbe you'd better stay the night here and let me drive you home to-morrow mornin'." When I had explained that Mrs. Gibbons was alone at our shack and might be frightened to stay there with only Collie for company, he warned me to "walk fast," and "if you have lost sight of Carpenter by the time you get opposite to Josie's place, get her to ride home alongside of you."

The ancient sorrel was still sleeping soundly before the post-office when I left the village and struck a trail leading straight to the base of Mullen Hill Road. After proceeding for a half-hour or more,

I glanced backward. Two men were following, but at too great a distance to be recognized. Of Mr. Carpenter there was no sign. Far ahead, several dark figures near the railway tracks indicated the presence of a gang of laborers. As their foreman would certainly be a white man, I could remain near him until the two strange men had passed along or Mr. Carpenter should appear. But between these laborers and myself was the stretch of road bordered on one side by the forest and on the other by the high, board fence, which prevents horses from getting a view of trains on the tracks skirting the banks of the Big Klickitat. For a moment I paused irresolutely. Then, reasoning that the two Italians, as I assumed the approaching men to be, were probably honest laborers, bound for some up-country ranch, continued on my way. But no sooner had I gained the stretch of fenced-in road than a panic of nervousness seized me and sent me scurrying along, looking for a way out of what seemed a trap. The sight of a narrow opening among the bushes growing at the edge of the forest's side of the road, and showing where a cow trail had at some past period led straight down to the river, impelled me to climb the steep bank. The fact that the two men were no longer to be seen, proved that they had quickened their pace and were temporarily concealed by a bend of the road. I knew that they must soon again come into

view. Crouched behind a cluster of bushes which probably had grown since the trail had been abandoned, because of the building of the railway fence above the river bank, I waited until the Italians, laughing and gesticulating after the manner of their race, had passed along the road directly below my eerie. During the next few minutes I mentally retracted my suspicions regarding them and was about to descend and continue on my way when they stopped. They had reached an abrupt turn of the road, which showed clearly that no human being was traveling it for at least a mile ahead of themselves. Apparently nonplussed, and, from their gestures, excited and angry with one another, they began to retrace their steps. Then came the illuminating idea that they had not seen me take the road following the river, and that when reaching the forks below the first curve of the trail, they instinctively had selected the road which appeared to be the most frequently traveled. Their behavior seemed to indicate that they had no real business up-country, had not asked for geographical information at the village, and probably had not intended to return there after securing my silver belt. I watched them until they were hidden by the first sharp turn of the road. Then, anxious to know if Mr. Carpenter and the drowsy sorrel were approaching, gradually moved higher up the side of the steep bank,

giving slight heed to my footing, and, tripping, fell headlong against a boulder.

When consciousness returned, the scene was obscured by darkness, but the roar of the turbulent Big Klickitat helped me to soon realize what had happened, though not the full extent of the predicament until I attempted to stand up. That effort was followed by the almost intolerable pain of a sprained ankle. Because the moon was not visible, I knew that the night was still young and that there was scant hope of obtaining aid before morning when Mr. Tanner would be passing that way and were some bright object to lie directly in his path, the old pioneer's keen eyes would be certain to see it. Struggling to my knees, I unclasped the silver belt and flung it toward the road. It struck somewhere with a resounding ring, but the effort resulted in a second loss of consciousness, from which I was aroused by something damp and cold upon my face. The risen moon revealed the outlines of the forest trees, bushes, boulders, and the familiar shapes of a little woman and a big dog.

"Lucky this isn't a cold night," said Evelyn Gibbons, as she bent over me, "or you'd have been frozen to death. Try to warm your hands on the glass of the lantern."

"How did you happen to come here?"

"Collie led me. He made me come. It was long

after dark when Mr. Carpenter came with your bag, and when he said you'd left the village first and that he'd seen nothing of you since, we decided that you'd stopped at Josie's and she'd persuaded you to spend the night there. I'd been in bed hours ago only for Collie. He kept running to the door, and smelling of a dress, lying on the couch in your room. Then he began to howl. He carried on something fierce. He'd scratch on the door and I'd let him go out. But in two minutes he'd be there wanting to come in, all the while moaning and howling like mad, and seeming to ask what I meant by sitting there in the warmth and light when you were somewhere in the cold and dark. Two or three times I went to the bar-gate and listened and waited, thinking you might be coming along. All I could hear was the coyotes barking down in the canyon and those queer whisperings of the trees. Haven't you noticed," she interpolated, "what a queer, sighing sound the leaves make when you wake up in the middle of the night? And the woods looked so awful dark—just a solid black, like it could be cut with a knife. I got afraid of—oh, I don't know what—but every time I'd try to read I'd get thinking that perhaps you'd never got to Josie's, but might have got hurt on the way; perhaps slipped down the bank at that steep place near the forks of the road, or else had tumbled on to the railroad track and was waiting—unconscious—to be

run over by the Goldendale train. Finally, I took the lantern and Collie, and went to the end of the wagon track, and then through the woods road. It was awful dark along there, but by the time we'd reached the letter-boxes the moon had come out. From there on, Collie led. But every few minutes he'd come tearing back, begging me to hurry. I was wondering if he meant to take me clear to Baldwin when he stopped down below here, in the middle of the road. Then I knew he'd found something of yours. He kept his paw on that belt until I picked it up. Then he ran straight up here. That's all."

All! Traveling for half of a night through the primeval forest with only the protection of a dog, and with no thought of fatigue or of attack from a renegade Indian or a drunken laborer. Nor did Evelyn Gibbons deem it a hardship to sit on the ground beside me while the moon—sailing now high, now low, cast weird shadows upon the wild landscape, while from near at hand came the bark of prowling coyotes, and, from far off, the intermittent cry of a cougar. Collie, crouching close at our feet, watched with us for the dawn which flared up suddenly in the east not long after the moon had set and the last star had faded out of the sky. Then the well-borer's wife cushioned my head upon her ulster and rose stiffly to her feet. "I'll go for Josie's hack and we'll soon get you home," she said, and hurried down the trail. In

an incredibly short time she was back, accompanied by Josie, who, taking me across her back, like a sack of meal, bore me to the road and deposited me in her "hack." Collie rode with us despite Josie's protests and we four proceeded homeward, the weary little wife of Jack Gibbons stretched at full length in the back of the wagon with her brown head pillowed on Collie's red-gold coat, and I perched upon the seat beside the squaw.

Thus it happened that Richard and Mr. Gibbons, returning at noon of that day, found Josie compounding a healing lotion of aromatic herbs and Evelyn installed as housekeeper *pro tem*.

The well-borer had not liked the up-country claim and almost immediately started to investigate some others east of The Dalles. Josie, having completed her work, was about to start for home and might quite conveniently have driven Mr. Gibbons to Baldwin. She positively refused to have anything whatever to do with him and drove away in solitary state.

"You folks kin understand that my wife ain't nobody's hired girl. She's cookin' here because it suits her to do it," explained Mr. Gibbons with his habitual grace of expression when he was ready to start on his journey. "Don't you and your sister make no mistake about that, Van Cortlandt."

"That fellow's aggressive ways have made a lot of enemies for him hereabout, and it's a good thing

he's going away," remarked Richard, while Mrs. Gibbons was dutiably walking to the gate with her morose helpmate. "But it will be lonely for that little woman on an up-country ranch as far from any neighbors as her husband can get."

"Her beauty will mature and nobody will be there to appreciate it; after a time it will fade and nobody will care," I sighed. Having no real grievance of my own, it was easy to worry over another's misfortunes.

"She'll be as well off in the end as though she had had an opportunity to see the more brilliant phases of life," replied Richard the philosophical.

When Evelyn had bidden Gibbons good-bye at the bar-gate, she came running into the house. Her face was flushed, smiling and happy. "It's so much nicer to be staying over here with you two friends than all alone at Fleitmanhurst!" she exclaimed.

To have Evelyn here is a great privilege. Nevertheless, I am rejoicing that she is soon to leave these parts, being oppressed with the fear that Seton may change his mind about returning here or that Josie's enmity toward Gibbons may result tragically. I am sure that were anything to happen to him his young wife would be honestly grieved, and said as much this morning to Seldie, who appeared unexpectedly. As her funds are getting low she has returned from Port-

land to her boarding camp and the region whose general storekeeper will extend her credit.

"Sure, she'd be sorry!" agreed the ex-dressmaker, "but she'd soon get over it—and a good thing, too. Otherwise, she'd stay a widow and she ain't cut out by Nature for getting along by herself. She unconsciously gives out so much love that she's bound to get a lot of it in return—excepting from jealous cats like Mrs. Blacke-McCormick and her gang. Deliver me from a country neighborhood," she went on, roused to wrath by the remembrance of the gossip at the last meeting of the sewing circle. "Folks around here has so little of genuine interest to talk about, that they naturally make up stuff. Just now they're taken up with tryin' to believe that Mis' Jack Gibbons is a designin' hussy, when all the time they know perfectly well she's a simple, good-natured little girl who never had a wrong thought in her life. Aside from the McCormick cat, the rest of these women ain't downright malicious and if something really serious was to happen to the Gibbonses, they'd forgive her quick as scat for everything they're pretendin' to believe of her."

"So long as Mrs. Gibbons keeps that pretty face and graceful figure, she'll have enemies," declared Richard, having the final word against Seldie, which is, indeed, a triumph.

"This morning I came specially to say that I'd stay here and chaperone Evelyn—and help her to cook for Mr. Van Cortlandt—if you'd like to go back to Portland for a few days to see a surgeon about that ankle. Josie Skookem knows a lot but she ain't no medical college graduate. If some of the little bits of bones in that foot of yours has been broken, *she'll* never find it out."

This offer was gratefully accepted, although Richard looked glum at the prospect of having to listen for a week to Seldie's unlimited flow of words. Josie, as it proved, had not made a mistake, but it was a satisfaction to hear an expert bone-setter corroborate her diagnosis.

CHAPTER XIX

THE well-borer is dead. His way of leaving this world fully atoned for whatever sins he may have committed while in it. Nobody says this more frequently than his former foes, Josie Skookem and Indian Jim, although they were not among those who saw him sacrifice his life for Little Jim. Unnoticed, the little fellow had followed Mr. Tanner from the freight-house to the wharf, but, instead of staying close beside the white-haired pioneer as was his custom, the boy had wandered toward the bluffs. One among the group of Indians, villagers and orchardists assembled at the wharf watching the simultaneous arrival of the steamers from Portland, and The Dalles, happened to glance upward, saw the gaudily garbed little figure poised on the edge of the black rocks threatening the Columbia, and shouted a warning in Chinook. Instantly several Klickitats and whites ran forward, shouting, in a vain attempt to attract the boy's attention to themselves and away from the river. But Little Jim, fascinated by the sight of the approaching steamers which puffed and wheezed as they flung gray clouds from their tall,

yellow pipes and churned the waters into foaming billows with their huge wheels, saw only these wonder canoes of the white man, and, eagerly stretching his brown arms toward them, lost his balance. Like a brilliant ball, turning over and over, as it seemed to me, watching from the up-river steamer's deck, he fell into the swift-rushing, ice-cold flood of the mighty Columbia. The shouts of the throng upon the wharf were echoed by the passengers on the decks of both steamers: the next instant we on the Portland boat saw evidences of excitement among the people gathered at the bow of the smaller craft. Then the crowd parted and a tall, black-haired man leaped upon the railing, jumped from it into the river and swam rapidly toward the drowning child. Quick, sharp commands came from the captains of both steamers, signal bells clanged and deckhands hastily lowered dingeys.

"He's got him! He's got the kid, sure! He's saved Little Jim!" shouted the people on the wharf and the steamers, as they saw the boy straddle the swimmer's neck and bury his little fingers in his coarse, black hair. "They're all right now!"

But were they all right? Suddenly the swimmer's strong, swift strokes ceased. He shouted something unintelligible to the crowd on the wharf and then, freeing himself of his burden, sank out of sight under the waters.



WRAPPED SEPARATELY, THE FRUIT IS PACKED IN BUSHEL BOXES, WORTH NET,
ONE DOLLAR PER BOX

"Poor Gibbons has got a cramp!" exclaimed Percy Nelson, flinging off his coat and jumping into the river. His example was promptly followed by several Klickitats and white men, one of whom soon had Little Jim in his grasp: The man who had dared death for the sake of an "Injun's kid" was beyond human aid when laid upon the wharf. In his pocket were found the deed for the back-country relinquishment, purchased the previous day from an agent at The Dalles, and a letter from a man agreeing to pay five hundred dollars for the well-boring machine.

Despite the arguments of Richard and Percy, who had driven Nan down to Baldwin to meet me, the neighboring Klickitats insisted upon heading the band of settlers that accompanied Jack Gibbons' body from the village to Fleitmanhurst. The weird procession started at twilight and its way up the steep hill and along the wood roads was illumined with rude torches that cast long, grotesque shadows before the marchers, and threw strange gleams of light into the dim recesses of the primeval forest. The white friends marched silently. The Indians beat tom-toms and their squaws continually uttered mournful howls. It was after midnight when Evelyn Gibbons, awakened by the sounds of savage music and voices, and the tramping of many feet on the road leading toward Fleitmanhurst, sat half up in her bed and murmured drowsily to Seldie: "Indians celebrat-

ing something or other," and slept again, the while her neighbors, white and red, carried her dead husband to her home. Two days later we buried him atop of one of the hills overlooking the little homestead. This was the request of his widow, "because Jack always said he hadn't any folks but me, and this," glancing about the shack which they had occupied together, "is the only real home we ever had after we were married." Later she asked: "Couldn't I stay right on here and earn a living by baking and mending for bachelors and grass widowers?" Her voice was pathetically wistful, and Richard hastened to assure her that she was welcome to the use of the shack for as long as she cared to stay there. "But you won't have to work for your living," he continued. "The price of the well-boring outfit will bring in enough income to feed and clothe you—if you're willing to accept five thousand dollars for it."

"Is the machine worth that much?" Evelyn Gibbons was as frankly surprised as I was secretly astonished at the amount of the offer.

"The machine is worth whatever anyone will pay you for it," was Richard's evasive reply, as he handed me a telegram brought to the ranch that morning by a special messenger from Baldwin. It read: "Have seen associated press story of well-

borer and Little Jim. Offer Evelyn five thousand dollars for the outfit. Seton Postley."

Seldie, as staunch a friend as she is an enemy, abandoned her plan of enlarging her river boarding camp, and, without any warning whatsoever, transferred herself and her trunk to Fleitmanhurst. "It won't be for long, Mr. Van Cortlandt," she remarked enigmatically. "Anyone with a head less thick than a post's could guess who paid the five thousand dollars for that second-hand well-boring machine. If Evelyn lives alone, Mrs. Blacke-McCormick will lie awake nights inventing slanders that too many people round here will be ready to believe."

CHAPTER XX

RICHARD is unaware that I had only six thousand dollars when I bought this quarter section without having seen it or knowing enough to know that "a place without water's no good," to quote from the Blacke-McCormick lexicon. He guesses that I saved considerably more money than those few thousands during the years devoted to journalism, though in those days he often chided me for my senseless extravagances. It is, however, so pleasant to be credited with more thrift than I am entitled to, that I refrain from mentioning my bank account and privately practice economies that, did he know of them, would make him call my bluff. Fortunate, indeed, was I to be able to sell enough stuff to various eastern periodicals to pay Richard the money advanced for the boring of the well, its pump, gasolene engine and tower house. So much scribbling not only occupied many of the winter days and evenings following Gibbons' tragic death, but kept me busy in the intervals of superintending the spring discing of the orchard acreage and pruning of the trees, the four sprayings between budding and cropping times and

the packing of one hundred boxes of apples. My own big, beautiful apples! All of them delicious, though some of them are called after King David. For the little trees in the hillside orchard are now over four years old. Yesterday Seldie, Evelyn, some of the Tanners and I drank to their continued health in Hood River cider sent to us by Philip Trevor, who piously endeavors to make prohibitionists of all of his friends. In rare instances he partly succeeds. Incidentally, we, in common with the rest of the countryside, observed Thanksgiving Day, passing nearly all of the time in the open, so exceptionally balmy is this autumn's weather. But for the brown and gold of the woods and the absence of the birds, we might imagine ourselves facing summer instead of winter.

At this season the sunset effects are sublime. As day begins to wane, all sorts of shapes and colors are assumed by the clouds assembled about Hood's eternally white-capped peak. While watching one of these spectacles, it is easy to understand why the Japanese reverence their Fugi-yama. I am quite ready to believe that a beautiful goddess dwells within Mt. Hood, and Pagan enough to wish that she would emerge, that I might offer her homage. Yet there are persons who believe that I would part with my orchard, its matchless view and its peace for four times as much as I paid for it five years ago last January. One of these phlegmatic creatures is a Port-

land real estate agent, who writes: "You are simply vegetating on that hill, a hundred miles from anywhere, when you might be living comfortably on the income of what a client of mine will pay for your quarter section. He says he can make a gentleman's country place of the home "forty," because the natural beauty of the land has been carefully preserved, whereas it might have been destroyed by an axe in the hands of an ignoramous. He plans to cut up the remainder of the quarter section into forty-acre holdings for bungalow parks." That Portland capitalist is going to change his plans in so far as this place is concerned. He shall not have my home, my orchard or my view. Neither shall he "bungalowize" the remaining hundred and twenty acres for the benefit of summer pleasure-seekers. These wooded acres happen to be the summer abiding place of certain valued friends of my own. The birds shall not be threatened nor driven away. Moreover, a flock of summer idlers would not fit into this picturesque landscape as do Josie Skookem, Sally, the two Jims, and their kindred. Anyhow, I shall not sell for that perfectly womanly reason "because."

Not long ago this Portland real estate agent, who frequently prowls about this neighborhood seeking whom he may devour, said to me: "Had you not been able to earn money with your pen, you couldn't have done much toward developing this land." He should

know that any woman with a pair of capable hands and the spirit to use them can do much toward developing an orchard within five years. A graduate of a normal college, for instance, might secure the appointment of teacher of the district school and devote the major portion of her salary to the clearing and planting of a small orchard, say five acres. Richard and Seldie have frequently remarked that a woman who would set up a tiny shop at Letter Box Grove for the convenience of settlers needing innumerable small articles, could probably net eight or ten dollars a week, and yet have time to do everything to her orchard save the plowing. If the Danish Swansens, working in their half-hearted, desultory style, can eke out an existence with their butter-making and chicken-raising, surely a woman working whole-heartedly and toward the goal of independence, could earn the money with which to pay for all the extra labor needed to develop her land. Then there is Seldie's example to be followed—to a limited extent. A spring, summer and autumn boarding camp in the wilderness could be made to pay a hundred per cent profit that could be expended upon man labor, farming implements and horses—or a motor tractor. A still, small voice tells me that I am destined to be ensnared by a motor tractor agent some day, as the literature received from one of them has a fatal fascination for me. How glorious to go careering over

the country, pulling out stumps and scattering earth by the ton! Collie would fully enter into the spirit of it. Would the Indians think it a devil wagon? I am always wondering what these red people privately think of the habits and belongings of their white neighbors: and if those opinions, so carefully guarded, are flattering. Whenever groups of these aborigines are chatting together in Chinook on the river boats and in the village, I suspect that they are extracting amusement from our garb and our affectations. The calm of the Klickitats is restful. They do not upset one's nerves by jumping about and doing meaningless things. Because their movements invariably seem to be purposeful, their minds probably are so.

All the Indian women look much older than their actual age, and, as they apparently pass directly from a full-faced girlhood into a semi-withered, elderly state, they practically have no middle age. The blooming, flirtatious young matron of the Caucasian race is unknown to aboriginal Klickitat society.

That white-bearded, leading pioneer, Mr. John Tanner, says that the Indian woman ages prematurely because her life is a hard one. I fail to see what is the hardship of an existence passed chiefly in the open whenever desirable, yet sufficiently sheltered from the elements. As the average squaw is stout

and of strong physique, she obviously gets enough nourishing food. Certain it is that the full-grown Indian man or woman must be blessed with a marvelous constitution since the great mortality among the infants of the red race proves that those who reach maturity instance the survival of the fittest. The American aboriginal struggles through infancy under most adverse conditions. When a papoose becomes ill, a medicine man beats a tom-tom for the benefit of the sufferer, instead of advising its mother to wash its mouth with a solution of soda water and herself with hot suds. Moreover, every squaw covers her baby's face with so many layers of blanketing that one wonders how it can possibly breathe or why it does not acquire sore eyes from its germ-infected veils. Yet a papoose with impaired vision or an eruptive skin is rare. This is probably because a young child having any sort of physical affliction has a slender chance to regain its health or to live at all on account of the nomadic habits of its parents and their carelessness about sanitation.

Despite a reputation for phlegmatism, a squaw is always greatly distressed when her papoose dies. She is more apt, when thus bereaved, to seek the sympathy of a white neighbor rather than that of her own brave who is quite likely to apply the lash if the deceased child was a boy. It matters not to some Indian fathers how many infant daughters sicken

and die. There will be others, if not by the present consort, then by her successor. Sometimes the first wife does not wait for the Great Spirit to release her of her lord and task-master. If a husband develops a particularly unpleasant disposition, the modern squaw is not dilatory about devising a means of getting away from him. But she does not desert him for some other man, red or white. The Klickitat woman is not polygamous and she has small patience with those of her sex who are so. The few aboriginal girls who go wrong are not of those who remain with their nomadic, semi-barbarous parents, but of those taken from the reservations by a paternal government and sent to school where they learn many things in addition to the three R's. Josie loudly denounces Uncle Sam's seminaries for his copper-hued nieces: "My little girl she no go Injun school. Home with me, I know all what she do."

Nearly always the civilization imparted by education to an Indian girl is merely surface deep. While living among white people she endures shoes, stockings and a hat, but the moment she returns to her natural environment, she puts on moccasins, blanket and head-kerchief. Quite promptly she casts aside her acquired habits. Of what use are the domestic arts in a home lacking a range to cook upon, napery to wash and a wooden floor to scrub? The aboriginal manner of housekeeping involves

scarcely any work and leaves the housekeeper an abundance of leisure for roaming through the forests, riding over shaded trails, and picking wild fruits on the mountainsides. To upset an Indian woman's traditions and in exchange for them give her elastic laws of morality and the nerve-racking customs of civilization, seem to me to be wrongs which the red race have to revenge in addition to that of being driven from their hereditary hunting grounds.

CHAPTER XXI

MYRIADS of pale green leaves deck the young apple trees of Mira-Monte's orchard, but this wealth of foliage does not obscure our view of Mt. Hood. Seton Postley declares that the scene from the shack's veranda is more enchanting than when he first saw it. But Seton, as well as the orchard, is several years older, and, judging by the altered expression of his eyes and his mouth, sees all things with a clearer vision. His arrival was heralded by Mr. John Tanner and Little Jim, who kept Collie in a highly excited state, as they drove through the bar-gate and between the rose-trees bordering the park and separating it from the vegetable garden. Not until the brown cayuses had been tethered to the trunk of our roof-tree did the white-haired pioneer explain that he had brought a passenger up Mullen Hill:

"Me an' Little Jim's plum wore out a-listenin' to poetry talk. Since we picked him up at the boat landin' that there young Postley, what spent a summer here a spell back, done nothing but make a fuss about the views an' the way the birds is singin' to each other, an' the fast'ation of the forest *prime-*

evil. He let on that all the while he was travelin' across the country from back east, he could jest *see* how Klickitat was a-lookin' with the flowers a-spreadin' of theirselves all over the hills an' the rivulets a-runnin' like silver threads through the canyons, an' all because of the joy of summer bein' in his heart. Them was his words, as near as I can remember. I s'pose he'll be along here after a spell, though he didn't jes' state the time. He didn't wait to say anythin' after he see that little widow woman of Gibbonses' a-settin' on her doorstep. He jest jumped out of the hack and run over to her. I s'pose she'll soon be leavin' here along of him," mused the old pioneer, the while he thoughtfully stroked his white whiskers. "Yet it's a good place to stop in—this country of the Klickitats."

We did not reply that Seton had come to live in this country of the Klickitats because to circulate that news is his own business. Anyhow, the neighbors will invent plenty of news when they see a throng of carpenters building a bungalow *de luxe* on the highest hill of the property purchased by Seton from the Lorings, and a much larger force of workmen clearing twenty acres of orchard land. Seton is going in for orcharding, because, as he pertly explained, "he can profit by all of my mistakes." At the same time he is putting all responsibility upon my shoulders by making me general superintendent

at a salary of twenty-five dollars per month. This is a welcome job, for I have agreed to buy a motor tractor. Five hundred dollars is not too much to pay for a machine guaranteed to go over the ground with any of the cultivating implements drawn by horses. And when it is not working it will not be eating. The fact that horses must be fed in and out of season was one of two reasons why I employed men owning teams to do my clearing and cultivating. The other reason was the fear of depleting my capital to the extent of eight hundred dollars and with that money acquiring, possibly, a pair of animals temperamentally opposed to pulling a pound of weight.

Speaking of capital brings to mind a question often put to me in letters from friends in the east, who fancy they would like to go into business in the west: "How much capital does a person need to embark in apple-growing?" It would be as easy to say how many blades of grass there are to an acre of land, because of the difference in people. But one well-known case may be cited. About eighteen years ago a postman of Portland, Oregon, went to Hood River in the same state, with a few hundred dollars, and there purchased a forty-acre tract. At intervals it was necessary for him to take employment away from home to support his family, but meanwhile, he cleared and planted his land. Within twelve years he developed a thirty-acre orchard, which could not

to-day be bought for less than fifty thousand dollars. Starting practically without cash capital, within less than two decades this ex-letter carrier has achieved a fortune. Any man or woman who has the ambition to succeed, backed by determination and energy, can scarcely fail to make a comfortable living during the years while the apple orchard is maturing.

An easily answered question is: "How much land does an apple-grower need?" Where there is a large capital to draw upon, the more acreage the better; because no sure investment will pay so large a dividend as will fruit lands in the states of the Pacific Northwest. Where the capital is moderate, it is unwise to attempt to develop more than fifteen acres; ten acres would be the strictly conservative amount. Where there is practically no capital, it is advisable to clear only two or three acres at a time and have the trees on those growing while earning money for the clearing of more land.

When one remembers that the states of Washington and Oregon are each larger than Pennsylvania, New York and Delaware combined, it is difficult to tell the would-be orchardist where to go. The highest-priced land is naturally nearest to the fruit sections of world-wide reputation, but it is not necessarily the best land. While some capitalists are to-day buying the old and highly productive orchards round about Hood River, Oregon; near White Sal-

mon, on the north bank of the Columbia River, and in the vicinity of Wenatchee, Washington, others are acquiring large tracts of unimproved acres further eastward in the country of the Northern Pacific Railway's course, because such lands are still comparatively cheap. Raw land, more or less timbered, is worth from ten to fifty dollars per acre; depending upon value of the timber—if any—and ease of cultivation after being cleared. Slightly rolling land is preferred for orchards, the more level areas being used for wheat, etc. The cost of clearing averages one hundred dollars per acre, and sometimes runs considerably beyond that. Cleared land—raw—is worth from one hundred to two hundred dollars per acre. Planted to orchard, the values vary, according to age of trees, kind of fruit, and condition; and are worth from two hundred dollars to a thousand dollars per acre. The prospective orchardist, however, should settle as near to others as possible, and preferably close to a section which has or soon will have a fruit association, because one can greatly profit by watching and imitating the methods of experienced and successful neighbors. There is much to be learned about cultivation. This work includes plowing in the autumn, discing in the spring, and harrowing continuously until the first of August. The aim is to keep a dust mulch about two inches deep all the time. The cost of doing this—if the

labor must be hired—is twenty-five to thirty dollars per acre.

No part of the work is more important than spraying, which should be done thoroughly not less than four times each season. For apples, the first spray—lime sulphur, one gallon to fifteen gallons of water, adding three-quarters of a pint “Black Leaf 40” to each one hundred gallons of water—is done when the buds begin to show green or to burst. If aphids are present, use Bordeaux nozzle. The second spray—one gallon to twenty-five of water—should be given just before the blossom buds separate in the cluster and show *pink*, using the mist nozzle. The third spray—lime sulphur, one gallon to thirty-five gallons of water and five pounds of arsenate of lead per one hundred gallons of water, should be given just after the petals fall, using the calix nozzle. The fourth spray, given from ten to fourteen days after the third spray, is the same in all respects. If the weather is very hot at the time of the last two sprayings, great care is necessary to prevent “burning or scalding.” Atonic sulphur, twelve pounds to one hundred gallons of water is less dangerous, but as it is very expensive, is seldom used.

If the autumn rains begin early and the season has been favorable for scab, it is often advisable to spray in September, using lime sulphur, one gallon to thirty-five gallons of water. Practically all orchard-

ists having ten or more acres now use a power (gasolene) sprayer, holding either one hundred or two hundred gallons, and using two sets of hose. Under favorable conditions, with water easily obtainable, the power sprayer will do from ten to twenty acres in ten hours, according to age of trees. This requires two men to spray and a driver of two or three horses or a tractor. At the risk of being accused of being a paid booster of the tractor manufacturers, I must say that I cannot see why anyone should prefer a horse and his stable to a motor tractor and a neat little gasolene tank.

As the market demands large apples, thinning is imperative. This can be done as soon as fruit is as large as a pea, but most orchardists wait until after the "June drop," when all but one are removed from each cluster. When apples are the size of a golf ball, they must not be closer than five inches apart, and *never, under any condition, permitted to touch each other.*

Having grown a crop, do not consider that the work of the season is over with. Begin in October, according to the class of apples, whether "autumn" or "winter," to prepare for the picking and packing of the orchard's produce. The packer must be an expert and have a certificate from one of the Associations. A clever packer will put out about one hundred boxes in ten hours—the Washington state

working day—and receives about five cents per box. The sorters sort according to quality, and grade according to size, following strictly the Association rules. Hauling costs according to distance from railway or river, say from five to ten cents per box of apples. The cost of picking, packing, boxes, wrapping paper—each apple is wrapped separately—and hauling to shipping depot, is now forty cents per box. A ten-acre apple orchard in full bearing should produce from one thousand to two thousand bushel boxes, worth net (free of all expenses) one dollar per box.

CHAPTER XXII

THIS last year, the sixth of my sojourn here, has sped so swiftly that were it not for the work done on what Seton's mother calls his "playing at business orchard," I could doubt the evidence of the calendar. The motor tractor, working for some of my neighbors as well as for me, has half paid for itself, and is the delight of all of us save Margery Trevor, who has christened it Nan the Balker, because it balks whenever she tries to run it. As the little tractor behaves prettily on all other occasions, obviously Margery has not the masterful hands of a machinist—the class to which Seldie, Seton, Evelyn, Richard and I pride ourselves that we belong. Margery's forte is commanding a kitchen. At this moment she is in mine superintending the preparations for the dinner we are to give this evening for the Seton Postleys, just returned from honeymooning in a Puget Sound cottage. The former Evelyn Gibbons did not have to go east to be inspected by a fashionable and critical mother-in-law. The mountain came to Mohammed. Despite Richard's unveiled hints about the wisdom of minding my own business and letting other

persons take care of theirs, I wrote to Seton's mother last spring and invited her to come out and "rough it" among the apple trees. She came and the unexpected happened. Evelyn's simplicity, sweetness and beauty fascinated her, and in Seldie she instantly saw a woman after her own heart. Indeed, allowing for the difference in upbringing and environment, Seldie and the senior Mrs. Postley, are enough alike to be daughters of one mother. Their feeling toward each other is so purely sisterly that they have a dozen disputes in the course of every day they pass together, and they pass few days apart, although Seldie is again living at the boarding camp near the Big Klickitat.

Seton's mother arrived in time to witness the blossoming of the apple trees, and, yielding to the fascinations of an absolutely novel existence, let week after week slip by until the summer was half gone. Finally, of her own accord—as she fondly believes—she asked Evelyn to marry Seton. That was what Seldie had determined to make Mrs. Postley do. I never expect to know by what necromancy she accomplished the miracle.

The marriage took place in the little shack at Fleitmanhurst, and, having heard from Mr. Barney that the affair was to be very exclusive, Mrs. Blacke-McCormick brazenly invited herself and was scandalized to find Milly Skookem, Sally and the two Jims

“among those present.” Having watched her son depart for a honeymoon with the girl of his—and her—choice, what more natural than that Mrs. Postley, senior, should linger to superintend the furnishing of the bungalow *de luxe*. That duty performed, she remained to watch the harvesting of the apples—my second crop of King Davids and Delicious. This day the little trees are exactly six and a half years old, and the fruit recently picked from them as nearly perfect as apples can be. It is a goodly crop, but not so large as—Providence continuing gracious—it will be in future years. With the passing of those years other acres of Mira-Monte shall be cleared and planted. I have determined to continue the developing of land, which responds generously to culture, and certainly two-thirds of this quarter section is tillable. Despite the pessimistic cries: “Fruit-growing is being over-done!” and “Soon the crop of apples will be so great that they will not be worth the picking!” fruit-growing is *not* being overdone. The crops from twice as many orchards would not overstock the markets. But the orchardists of the Pacific Northwest are not merely producing fruit. They are growing it and packing it according to the most advanced ideas relating to every department of the industry. They aim at a condition where fruit boxes labeled “Washington” or “Oregon” will be readily purchased anywhere in the world and sold on

the strength of those labels. A buyer without opening the boxes will be satisfied that he is getting exactly what the label promises. That this already is true of a large proportion of the picks is now acknowledged, and as Associations are rapidly forming in all important sections, it soon should be true of the total pick. The growers have learned that only in this way can the export trade be secured and increased, and the section slogan is fast becoming: "The Pacific Northwest apple is the best apple that can be produced."

THE END

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